

THE INFLUENCE OF ARMINIUS  
UPON THE  
THEOLOGY OF JOHN WESLEY.

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## INTRODUCTION.

In a conversation some years ago with Dr. R. Newton Flew a judgment passed in his book, "The Idea of Perfection", to the effect that John Wesley's doctrine of Christian Perfection owed nothing to the Remonstrants, was discussed. The question arose as to Wesley's debt to the Dutch movement in other aspects of his theology. What was the actual significance of the claim, made by and for him, that Wesley belonged to the Arminian school of thought? Dr. Flew suggested that this general question would repay attention. He arranged for the writer, on entering upon Probationary pastoral duties, to write two essays around the theme and later advocated an attempt to write the thesis now submitted.

Little reading had been done before it became clear that Wesley's first-hand acquaintance with the actual writings of Arminius came, for the most part if not entirely, late in his life. When the broad outlines of Chapter VI. became clear the compiling of an adequate thesis under the title accepted seemed impossible. Yet the question of the real origins of those elements of Wesley's teaching designated "Arminian" remained to be answered, and an attempt to supply that answer was made.

It was early discovered that, in Wesley's England, the term "Arminian" scarcely indicated a faithful adherence to

the teaching of Jacob van Harman. Any attempt to elucidate the nature of Wesley's Arminianism called for some investigation of the usage of the term in the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries.

A further fact became clear. The views designated "Arminian" composed a small, if important, section only of the totality of Christian theology. This group of ideas had been the subject of debate in the English Church from the days of the Reformation, long before the influence of the Dutch re-emphasis touched the British Isles. It was found that Wesley himself claimed to derive this corpus of beliefs not from a Continental but from a British tradition even though he was prepared to accept the current designation of them as Arminian.

Attention was directed to the claim made by Wesley and abundance of earlier writers that the doctrines in question formed a part of that characteristic outlook in theology termed "Anglican" and were embodied in the authoritative formularies of the Church of England. Was this true or were those writers correct who strove to shew that the true doctrinal foundations of the English Church were Calvinistic?

The above is intended to serve as some explanation of the line of study that has been forced upon the writer by the negative conclusions early reached in the attempt to discover the influence of Arminius upon Wesley and also the order in

which the subject matter is treated.

It has been difficult to discover satisfactory terms to denominate movements, parties and doctrines. In particular, when referring to the views on the scope of Christ's Atonement which are attributed to Augustine and Calvin, it has been necessary to adopt the use of the term "Calvinist" in some connections which might make it seem that the writer was not fully appreciative of the great service rendered to the Christian faith and the Christian Church by the Genevan Reformer. But it is always to be remembered that while Arminius and Wesley agree to disagree with Calvin on the issue of the Divine Decrees they are fully aware of the validity and centrality of the major portion of his message.

Since the work began two books have appeared. They are both by experts and, in the case of Dr. A.W. Harrison's "Arminianism", much of the present field of enquiry is covered. Dr. G. Croft Cell's book,<sup>1</sup> on the other hand, appeared to challenge rather than to confirm some of the present writer's findings. But it is submitted that, where the contradiction is not due to questions of definition, Dr. Cell has hardly done justice to Wesley's clear and vigorous expression of unabated opposition of mind to the doctrines of High Predestination, albeit there were long periods when circumstances did not press him to set aside his distaste for controversial writing and oppose these tenets with sermon or tract.

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1. "The Rediscovery of John Wesley." 1935.

In regard to the use made of Dr. Harrison's book, which appeared in 1934, it may be said that the position outlined in the following pages is embodied substantially in the essays written in 1933 and which lie before the writer. Every effort has been made to pursue original lines of reading and to use Dr. Harrison's work as a check upon independent judgments. Naturally enough, however, the book referred to has frequently provided the felicitous and apposite phrase.

It may appear a defect that, in view of the generally accepted dictum that Methodist theology is best discovered in Methodist hymns, more use has not been made of the poetry of Charles Wesley. It is beyond all need of further statement that Charles Wesley's and other hymns of the Wesleyan side of the Evangelical Revival do enshrine the doctrine of a General Atonement, to use a phrase which, for want of a better, has served to denote the specifically "Arminian" doctrine. But the matters actually under consideration, being largely questions of origins, have not called for the kind of quotation or statement to be found in poetic forms but rather for the more formal presentation of detail to be found in the written sermons and published tracts of the elder brother. In any case, it is in the theology of John Wesley himself that our interest lies.

It was intended originally to introduce some matter descriptive of the influence of Arminius upon the early



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Methodist co-workers and successors of Wesley. But little could have been added in this respect which has not been said in regard to the Founder of Methodism himself. If the influence of Arminius upon Wesley was to a great extent indirect and by way of reinforcement of views obtained from other sources, so much the more with the early Methodists who, until many years after Wesley's death, would seem to have been content with that version of Arminianism offered to them by their leader. If an exception can be made in the case of Fletcher and Madeley it can only be added that a close study of the writings of the leading exponent of Methodist Arminianism after John Wesley himself would have demanded a separate examination. Nothing has therefore been added in regard to the sources of doctrine from which those other than Wesley himself may have drawn.

With this introduction the reader is now asked to turn to the following pages to seek an answer to the question: "Whence Wesley's characteristic evangel of 'Salvation in Christ offered to all mankind', the spring and content of his mission to his 'World Parish'?"

## CHAPTER 1.

### ARMINIANISM AND CALVINISM, A DEFINITION OF TERMS.

"It is well-known that John Wesley was the chief instrument in the revival and extension of the doctrines of an evangelical Arminianism as opposed in many important points to a rigid Calvinism".<sup>1.</sup> Thus a writer in the middle of the last century sums up the opinion of the majority of Wesley students who have written since the death of the leading spirit of the XVIIIth century revival in England and Wales. When Kirk wrote, the party names "Calvinist" and "Arminian" would be far more familiar and would convey much more to his readers than is the case today and they had a significance which was peculiar to the time, a significance now almost lost. The great theological controversy between "Calvinism" so called, and "Arminianism" so called, which had been in the foreground of the religious scene in Great Britain since the beginning of the Reformation, was hardly dead. Today only the earnest seeker will discover its grave.

Not that the underlying issues have ceased to be of importance, but the outward forms they now take are no longer covered or described by these particular terms.

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1. Kirk, "The Mother of the Wesleys". 1864, p.284.

"Such controversies as those between Calvinist and Arminian as to Divine Grace and Human Freedom are not so much settled as superseded; we have caught a deeper glimpse of Christian experience....."<sup>1</sup>.

Before then, we can proceed to assess the debt of Wesley to Arminius or to attempt to discover any connecting links between the Leyden Professor and the Fellow of Lincoln, some study of the significance of these terms, as commonly understood in Wesley's day is called for. "To say, 'This man is an Arminian' has the same effect on many hearers as to say 'This is a mad dog'". With this sentence Wesley opens his tract on "What is an Arminian?", and, in closing the paragraph he adds, "One word more: Is it not the duty of every Arminian Preacher, never, in public or in private, to use the word "Calvinist" as a term of reproach;..... And is it not equally the duty of every Calvinist Preacher ..... never ..... to use the word Arminian as a term of reproach?"<sup>2</sup>.

A glance into the works of Wesley's opponents during the Predestinarian controversy of circa 1770, such as Augustus Toplady's "Gospel Magazine", will supply numerous instances of the piling up of evils under the name.

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1. H. Wheeler Robinson: "The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit". 1928, p.263.
  2. "The Question 'What is an Arminian?' Answered." In "The Works of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.". X pp.358-61. The 3rd edition (1830) in fourteen volumes is used throughout the thesis and cited hereafter as "Works".

### 3.

To give a comparatively temperate example: "Arminianism is the head, and Socinianism is the tail, of one and the self same serpent; and when the head works itself in, it will soon draw the tail after it". Toplady gives much space in his "Vindication of the Doctrine of the Church of England"<sup>1</sup> to attempting a proof that Arminian is really Roman theology. He lays the blame for the introduction of it in England entirely upon Laud, ignoring the earlier exponents of a General Atönement, and has nothing good at all to say of the Archbishop. But whereas the extreme Calvinist attributed to those called Arminians every possible vice and heresy, there were many who willingly accepted the designation and many more in whom the term aroused no great emotion, being accepted as a convenient label for a well-known and easily recognised party in Church and State.

To the first group, the extreme Predestinarians, as we have seen, Arminianism meant Deism and Atheism, Arianism<sup>2</sup> or Popery in religion, Erastianism in ecclesiastical matters, and Jacobitism in Politics. To the Arminians themselves the term spoke of moderation, toleration, breadth of sympathy, and depth of learning; of order and dignity,

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1. Toplady's collected Works, published 1853.

2. Wesley, in his explanatory pamphlet, says "It may be necessary to observe, first, that many confound Arminians with Arians". Works, X. p.358.

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of respect for the Church of England tradition in worship and Church government, and of loyalty to the State and Monarch in politics.

The ordinary observer thought of an Arminian as a High Church Tory; of a Calvinist as a Low Church or Dissenting Whig. He might have simplified further, and in reply to a question as to who the Arminians were, might have answered shortly, "the Bishops". Thus had "this England" assumed the names of a XVIth century Frenchman, and a XVIIth century Dutchman to designate groups within herself which, in character and traditions could not have been more thoroughly her own!

But to suppose that Wesley and his closest followers counted their Arminianism to be this, and no more than this, would be a cardinal error, as will be shewn later. And to suppose that the more thoughtful, more worthy, English Arminians of the period had lost all realisation of the theological implications of the use of Arminius's name would be equally false. Or more correctly, amid the prevailing materialism as manifested in the indifference of the masses to religion, the preoccupation of the middle classes with money making, the worldliness of many of the lesser clergy, the detachment and retirement into scholarship of their superiors, and the private scepticism of the court circles, there were to be found men for whom

ideas of toleration meant more than mere indifference. Such men, as they viewed with sadness the spiritual decline around them, became increasingly conscious that the Christian message was one of redemption for all mankind from the follies and failures of its own self-confidence. The secularism of the many did but intensify the spirituality of the few. Of such were William Law, and William Romaine, whose Church, whether in St. George's, Hanover Square, or St. Dunstan's, Fleet Street, was so crowded by the poor folk that the pew holders retired in disgust. Whatever Law or Romaine may have said about the "Arminianism" so called, of their day, here in themselves was the thing itself, and they and their like were able to perceive their affinities with earlier groups and individuals motivated by a desire to offer the fulness of Christ to the totality of their fellows.<sup>1</sup>

Then again, there had begun during the later years of the previous century, a remarkable movement entirely within the Anglican Church, the formation of many scattered religious societies.<sup>2</sup> Where an incumbent became aware of his own spiritual need, one of these groups seeking together a deeper religious life, sprang into being. It was in one

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1. See A.W. Harrison, "Arminianism". 1937, Chapters V. & VI.

2. See J.S. Simon, "John Wesley and the Religious Societies".



of these societies that Wesley's conversion on May 24th 1738 took place, and from them he took the idea for his own societies. Exceptions however, do but prove the rule. If opponents of Arminianism used extreme language, as was the custom of the age, yet there were some grounds for the charges of Romanism and Socinianism. As to the first, the Non-jurors, a group amongst whom Arminianism, as we shall later use the term in a more exact sense, was universal, were staunch Jacobites, and therefore more than half committed to Romish affiliations on that head. But further, as the ultra High Church Party, their spiritual affinity was with the Primitive and undivided Church, in doctrine and practice, rather than with the Reformers. They would have admitted that they were nearer the Lutherans than the Calvinists, for they conceived of the XVIth century change in the English Church as a "protest" against aberration rather than a "re-formation" of the ἐκκλησία. The unity and the indivisibility of the Christian community was as dear both to the Melancthonian Lutherans, who played no small part in the formation of the Church of England standards, as to those of true Anglican outlook amongst whom the Non-jurors must be numbered. These latter, unwilling to accept the oath to William, whom they regarded as a usurper, had almost ceased to exist by the time of Wesley's ministry, but a great number of High Churchmen had

taken the oath and kept their own views. Thus High Churchmen, within and without the Establishment, had strong Jacobitic sympathies,<sup>1</sup> and what is more the country knew it. Further to this was the general assumption, one which is characteristic of an age which leaned either to a narrow dogmatism or to a general looseness of thinking, that what was not white must be black, what was not Calvin must be Pope. Not an age for nice discrimination, this, or for careful analysis. And moreover, a time when men were not scrupulous as to method for what they believed to be a good end. Many who raised the cry of "Popery" against any questioning of absolute Predestination did so because they knew they could exploit the shallow antagonism of their fellows. But it was historical fact, for those who possessed the erudition to discover it, that several of Arminius' Dutch and French successors had gone over to Rome, Bèrtius, one of Arminius' close friends, being a notable example. So it was that Wesley, like Arminius in Holland a century earlier, had to face the charge of being a Jesuit in disguise.<sup>2</sup>

As to Socinianism, here again the smoke was not without origin in fire. The Continental Remonstrant School of later

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1. Wesley's father, for instance.

2. Dr. Rattenbury, "The Conversion of the Wesleys". p. 185, gives another reason for this charge against Wesley.



days produced notable heretics, of whom Le Clerc is perhaps the most extreme case among the better known names.<sup>1</sup> While in England it was said of Tillotson, who was known to Calvinists and Non-jurors alike as a Socinian, that had his name not been prefixed to his sermons they would have passed for the work of Lodowick Muggleton.<sup>2</sup> But though the views of some who for a period accepted Arminianism did later diverge widely from accepted orthodoxy it was over points of doctrine other than the Decrees, generally on the doctrine of the Trinity. The spiritual and intellectual pilgrimage taken by such, one which keen critics could see to be a possible result from the Arminian conception of spiritual authority, is neatly outlined in a pamphlet of 1697 entitled "A Letter to a Convocation Man".

So much for the bad odour of the name which, for want of a better, must stand for that element in Christian theology which claims our interest. Which leads in turn to the question, - what is TRUE Arminianism?, - a question which is crucial for the thesis here maintained. For in an age when men were prone to use the word vaguely, to include

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1. Dr. Pope says "The immediate successors of Arminius declined from sound faith in some particulars; and in its own country the system is deeply tinged with Socinianism and Rationalism". But, in England, it was Calvinism that tended to Socinianism.
  2. Harrison, op. cit. p. 183. Muggleton was an eccentric fanatic of the Commonwealth.

under that classification a diversity of opinions, Wesley restored definition to the term.

In the first place, as the late Dr. G.C. Cell has so fully demonstrated in his book, "The Rediscovery of John Wesley", the Evangelical Revival under Wesley was a reaction against the very laxity in the Church of England noted above, the confusion which was responsible for a general suspicion and dislike of the Arminians of the time.

But it would seem that Dr. Cell very frequently uses the term "Arminian" in the sense in which it was misused by the XVIIIth century generality of men. The main theme of his book (p.23 &c) is that the Wesleyan movement was a conflict between "Arminianism" and Wesley's rediscovery of Calvin's and Luther's religion of Grace. It is beyond doubt that Wesley was in revolt against two things, the spiritual sterility of the Church of his age and the humanistic conception of salvation as being achieved through a search for holiness, to be found in the Pietists of the time, such as Law. It is somewhat difficult to appreciate what new presentation Dr. Cell seeks to make in his constant emphasis upon this. For all notable writers on Wesley, of whatever shade of opinion and of whatever period, from Piette, the Catholic, to the staunch Dissenter, Rigg; from Southey to the moderns such as Lavers and Lunn, have at least agreed here. But to say, as Dr. Cell does repeatedly say, that

Wesley's reaction against "Calvinism" is negligible as compared to his reaction against "Arminianism" is to do violence to the terms, notwithstanding the writer's occasional qualification of "Arminianism" to mean, for him, the barren religion of the Church of England. Writing to Jasper Winsom in May 1788 Wesley says, "We have found it so difficult to drive Calvinism out from among us that we shall not readily let it in again". And in September of the same year, to Lady Maxwell, "Is not Calvinism the very antidote to Methodism, the most deadly and successful enemy it ever had?". These statements come as the conclusion of Wesley's long experience. It is, further, hardly exact to contend that biographers and historians have consistently made the story of the Revival one of conflict between Arminianism and Calvinism. The subject indeed is not neglected but is, in fact, given but a small space in any book on Wesley and Methodism except in such ad hoc works as Dr. H.M. Hughes "Wesley and Whitefield". It would seem that Dr. Cell has attempted to say a little too much when he contends that Wesley was not really an Arminian, if the term is used with any respect for historical and theological meaning. So far as Wesley is concerned, we would agree with Dr. Cell, Arminianism means, in theology, the doctrine of a General Atonement; or negatively, a protest against the doctrine of Absolute Predestination, the "Decrees"

of Particular Election and Reprobation. "The errors" says Wesley himself "charged upon these (usually termed Arminians) by their opponents are five: (1) That they deny original sin; (2) that they deny Justification by Faith; (3) that they deny Absolute Predestination; (4) that they deny the Grace of God to be irresistible; and (5) that they affirm a believer may fall from Grace .

"With regard to the two first of these charges, they plead, Not Guilty. They are entirely false. No man that ever lived, not even John Calvin himself, ever asserted either Original Sin, or Justification by Faith in more strong, more clear and express terms, than Arminius has done. These two points, therefore, are to be set out of the question. In these both parties agree. In this respect, there is not a hair's breadth difference between Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitefield.

" But there is an undeniable difference between Calvinists and Arminians, with regard to the three other questions. Here they divide; the former believe absolute, the latter only conditional, predestination. The Calvinists hold (1) God has absolutely decreed, from all eternity, to save such and such persons and no others; and that Christ died for these and none else. The Arminians hold, God has decreed from all eternity, touching all that have the written word, 'He that believeth shall be saved, he that believeth not

shall be condemned", and in order to this "Christ dies for all, all that were dead in trespasses and sins that is, for every child of Adam, since in Adam all die ".

"The Calvinists hold, secondly, that the saving grace of God is absolutely irresistible; that no man is any more able to resist it than to resist the stroke of lightning. The Arminians hold that although there may be some moments wherein the grace of God acts irresistibly, yet, in general, any man may resist, and that to his eternal ruin, the grace whereby it was the will of God he should have been eternally saved.

"The Calvinists hold, thirdly, that a true believer in Christ cannot possibly fall from grace. The Arminians hold, that a true believer may 'make a shipwreck of faith and a good conscience' that he may fall, not only foully, but finally, so as to perish for ever.

"Indeed the two latter points, irresistible grace and infallible perseverance, are the natural consequence of the former, of the unconditional decree. For if God has eternally and absolutely decreed to save such and such persons, it follows both that they cannot resist his saving grace (else they might miss salvation) and that they cannot finally fall from that grace which they cannot resist. So that, in effect the three questions come into one: "Is predestination absolute or conditional?". The Arminians



believe it is conditional the Calvinists that it is absolute".<sup>1.</sup>

Here, in a formal and specific definition of Arminianism as the term had meaning for Wesley, with his knowledge both of the Arminians of his own day and of the history and content of doctrinal Arminianism from its origin, Wesley unambiguously states what he takes the word to mean. Here also is his definition of Calvinism, for by fair inference he knows of no other differentia than those given. Again on this point Dr. Cell seems to be at some pains to prove what is already generally accepted.

But would Wesley's definition of Arminianism have been accepted by Arminius? In his "Funeral Oration", delivered before the University of Leyden on the death of his friend, Peter Bertius speaks of one theological issue only as worthy of note in Arminius's life :- "Decretum scilicet Dei aeternum in Praedestinatione non esse, eligere praecise et absolute ad salutem quosdam, quos nondum decrevisset, creare; quod voluit D. Beza: neque vero, posito decreto creationis & praevisto lapsu, quosdam, citra antecedentem rationem Jesu Christi; ..... sed ex creatis et lapsis eos, qui vocanti Deo vera fidei obedientia responsuri essent....."

Further, if we examine Arminius' writings, we find that

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1. Works, X, pp. 359 - 10.

2. To be found as a preface to the Editions of Arminius' collected works.

his "Declaration of Sentiments" before the States of Holland on 30th October 1608<sup>1</sup>. contains a very long article, the first, "De Praedestinatione", (of which the author says, "Primus et primi nominis in Religione articulus, in quem meditationes quasdam habeo, iamque; inde a multis retro annis quippiam meditatatus fui, de Praedestinatione Dei est, ....."<sup>2</sup>), and nine short ones, five of which are on points immediately arising out of the disagreement on the first. Or, as Arminius puts it, "Sunt nempe quidam praeterea etiam alii Christianae Religionis Articuli, qui magnam admodum cum doctrina de praedestinatione affinitatem habent, atque magna ex parte ab ea pendent, cuiusmodi sunt, Providentia Dei liberum hominis arbitrium; perseverantia sanctorum atque certitudo salutis: .....".<sup>3</sup> The balance of four articles, although not specifically included in the foregoing statement, are, by the connective passages as well as by their nature, also pendant upon the first article.

1. Delivered in Dutch, but the Latin translation has been used as the Dutch is not easily available and is beyond the writer's linguistic attainments. Nicholl's, the English translator of Arminius, says the Latin version differs a little in tone from the original.
2. Throughout this essay the Frankfurt Edition of 1635, of Arminius' collected works has been used. An earlier edition (1628) has been compared and the comparison suggests no reason for not availing oneself of the more accessible of the two. Hereafter references to the Works will appear as "opera &c". The reference here 1. Opera, p. 81.
3. Opera, p. 97.

The other writings of Arminius which can give us any clue by their contents as to the real issue between himself and his accusers, setting aside those matters wherein he is undeservedly charged with opinions not his own through malice or the immature statements of those who associated themselves with him amongst the students, all lead to the same conclusion, namely that when we touch the Predestinarian question we touch the one point which gives any kind of theological meaning to the term Arminianism. The "Conference with Junius" (which took place in 1597; the report being published 1603); the Analysis of Romans 1X (written and sent to Snenacus in support of that individual's own work on the subject of Conditional Predestination, 1596, and published as an appendix to the following work); the "Examination of Perkin's Pamphlet" (published 1602); the "Examination of the Theses of Gomanus" (1604); the "Answers to the Questions put to the Curators of Leyden University" (1605); and the letter to Hyppolitus a Collybus (1608), are all directed to the one focal point:- a Conditional Election.

In confirmation of this delineation of Arminius' characteristic teaching, Limborch<sup>1</sup>, one of his most brilliant successors, reports categorically that Arminius dissented from his opponents only on the "Decrees". And, so far as modern

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1. "Historical Relation of the Origin and Progress of the Controversy about Predestination in the United Provinces".



writers are concerned, Dr. F. Platt says that the leading principles of Arminius were (a) the universality of the benefit of the Atonement, and (b) a restored freedom of the human will as an element in the divine decrees and in opposition to the assertion of the absolute sovereignty of God. "Apart from these and kindred questions involved in the problem of predestination Arminianism has no theological distinctiveness".<sup>1</sup> We may add to the above the production, for the Synod of Dort, of what amounts to the first confessional statement of the Remonstrants, the celebrated "Five points", not so very long after the death of Arminius himself, viz:

(1) That, before the foundation of the world or from all eternity, God decreed to bestow eternal salvation on those who, He foresaw, would maintain their faith in Jesus Christ inviolate until death; and, on the other hand, to consign over to eternal punishment the unbelieving who resist the invitation of God to the end of their lives.

(2) That Jesus Christ by His death made expiation for the sins of all and everyone of mankind, yet that none but believers can become partakers of this divine benefit.

(3) That no one can of himself, or by the power of his freewill, produce or generate faith in his own mind; but

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1. E.R.E. Article "Arminianism" Vol. 12, p. 807-816.

that man being by nature evil and incompetent both to think and to do good it is necessary that he should be born again and renewed by God for Christ's sake, through the Holy Spirit.

(4) That this divine grace or energy which heals the soul of man commences, advances and perfects all that can be truly called good in man; and therefore all the good works (of man) are ascribable to none except to God only, and to His grace, yet that this grace compels no man against his will, though it may be repelled by his perverse will.

(5) That those who are united to Christ by faith are furnished with sufficient strength to overcome the snares of the devil and the allurements of sin; but whether they can fall from this state of grace and lose their faith or not, does not yet sufficiently appear and must be ascertained by a careful examination of the Scriptures".<sup>1</sup>.

This is a convenient point to introduce those theological terms, the use of which was general in Wesley's time in this connection, and which remain with us today. "Election" and "Decree" may be taken as defined by usage and inference from what has already been written. As to the meaning of "Predestination" this thesis is a record of part of the search for the Scriptural meaning of the term. We may say that the first article of the "Five Points" is

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1. The "Five Points" of the Remonstrance appear in most systematic theologies covering the period and in E.R.E. and Enc. Britannica under "Arminianism".

on Predestination, the second on Justification, the Imputed Righteousness of Christ, and Faith; the third touches on Original Sin and Free Will and the New Birth; the fourth on Grace - repudiating the doctrine of Irresistible Grace; and the fifth on Sanctification and Final Perseverance. Here we have many names, but as we have maintained in this chapter, the issue is really confined. The point of departure is that interpretation of Scripture which maintains that "οἱ ἐκλεκτοί" of the Epistle to the Romans (and elsewhere in the New Testament) are so blessed by God antecedent to the mission and work of Christ; that "προορίζειν" <sup>1</sup>. has reference to particular individuals.

The doctrine of man's salvation built on these premises and usually spoken of as Calvinist is a closely-knit and logical structure. If it be attacked at one point much adjustment is involved elsewhere as a result.

The minds and consciences of Arminius and Wesley turned from the thought that God had arbitrarily condemned some of His created mankind to eternal punishment for sins which they had no power to avoid and granted to others, without reference to any thought or act on their part, a place in His eternal bliss. To them Absolute Predestination, Particular Election, and Reprobation seemed to be utterly irreconcilable with God's

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1. Romans, Vlll, 29-30 etc.

love and justice and mercy, with Christ's mission and work. But immediately the protest was made the whole theology of Sin and Grace and Salvation was involved in reconstruction.

The meaning and content of our two chief terms, Arminian and Calvinist, as they will be used throughout this thesis has now been defined. Calvinism is to stand for the doctrine of Particular Election, and Arminianism for the doctrine of a General Atonement.

Dr. Cell has minimised the importance of the gulf between the views of Wesley and his Calvinist opponents, contending that their unity in maintaining Salvation by Faith draws them far more together than their views on Predestination separate them. Wesley, he says, was on his own admission, almost a Calvinist.<sup>1</sup> To which Dr. Rattenbury replies "The little more and how much it is!"<sup>2</sup> and continues by pointing out that if Wesley was a Calvinist only as Arminius was a Calvinist then this is, after all, good reason for calling him an Arminian!<sup>3</sup> While Dr. Henry Bett remarks that to minimise

1. G.C. Cell, "The Rediscovery of John Wesley", 1935, p.19. Some of the quotations from Wesley used by Dr. Cell are taken from statements made in stout defence of Wesley's position against Calvinists. Where Wesley's precise mind has taken pains to define the issue before arguing his case, Dr. Cell finds evidence for supposing that he, Wesley, has little at issue with his opponents. An example appears on the page here referred to. Wesley's statement, "There is not a hair's breadth difference between Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitefield" can be seen in its true context earlier in this chapter, in the long quotation from "What is an Arminian?".
2. J.E. Rattenbury, "The Conversion of the Wesleys". 1938, p.184
3. loc. cit.

the difference that Wesley's belief in General Atonement made between him and the Calvinists, and then to prove him to be a Calvinist is paradoxical.<sup>1</sup>.

The theological field covered by the terms is narrow but central. The scope of Arminius' protest against the Calvinist ~~the~~ theology of his day, and the scope of Wesley's protest against Calvinism in the XVIIIth century England are one. What is the relation between the two centuries, the two men, if relationship there be?.

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1. Henry Bett, "The Spirit of Methodism", Fernley-Hartley Lecture, 1937, p. 174.



## CHAPTER 11.

### WESLEY'S BACKGROUND OF ARMINIANISM.

#### SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION.

In the sense defined the founder of the Evangelical Revival was an Arminian, and the significance of this fact must neither be under- nor over-estimated. It is true that the Revival cannot be confined to the creation and rise of Wesleyan Methodism and its later branches<sup>1.</sup> at home (now happily reunited<sup>2.</sup>) or abroad. Apart from the incalculable influence upon the social life of the nation, upon politics. and economics, upon the Anglican Church and upon the Nonconformist Churches generally, there came into existence along with the Wesleyan Methodism, and very largely in Wales, a denomination which was proud to be known as the Calvinistic Methodist Church. To Wesley's friend, co-student and co-worker, George Whitefield, this body owes its peculiar and special character. For Whitefield and Wesley, although at one in their protest against the state of religion in all the existing denominations in England, and though maintaining,

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1. The Primitive Methodists, the United Methodist Free Church, the Bible Christians, the Methodist New Connexion, the Wesleyan Reform Union, and the Independent Methodist Churches.
  2. With small exceptions, the last two named.

except for a few months' coolness, their friendship and mutual admiration<sup>1</sup>, deeply disagreed in interpreting the Scriptures (and the Anglican Doctrinal standards) where they treat of the scope of God's proffered salvation of mankind from sin. Further, while Wesley and Whitefield were each endowed with sufficient depth of spiritual insight and breadth of Christian sympathy to appreciate the work and character of the other, Whitefield felt so strongly on the point, that on several occasions<sup>2</sup> he pleaded strongly that the Wesleys and their preachers should not make open confession of their Arminian views. And, when their followers of lesser grace<sup>3</sup> compelled an open rupture in the movement, the leaders had to see that the difference was so radical that they must be content to go their several ways, albeit in love.<sup>4</sup>

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1. At Whitefield's special request Wesley preached the former's funeral sermon.
  2. Especially on the publication, in 1739, of the sermon, (not in the Standard Sermons; Works, Vol. VII., p.373) on "Free Grace" with Charles Wesley's Hymn "Universal Redemption", appended. See "Letters", Vol. I., p.302.
  3. It can hardly be denied that it was the Whitefieldians who shewed the most intransigence - Wesley's discipline over his followers was stronger and he was only too willing to admit difference of opinion on the disputed point.
  4. Wesley's comment to Whitefield is worth quoting :- "There are bigots both for Predestination and against it. God is sending a message to those on either side. But neither will receive it, unless from one of his own opinion. Therefore for a time you are suffered to be of one opinion and I another. But when His time is come....God will make us of one mind." Standard Edition, "Letters", Vol. I., p.351.

There was, however, no love lost on Wesley and his views by such Calvinist protagonists as Toplady and Hill.

However, the actual Calvinistic controversy was an unedifying business and it is in the interests of all parties involved, as well as of their posterity that it should only be remembered when, as in this case, it is necessary to make from it some deduction. It took place, and created the two Methodist streams, Calvinist and Arminian. The interesting thing is that the Whitefieldian branch won much more sympathy from the Presbyterians and Independents than did Wesley. It was the Calvinist theology, prevalent in Nonconformity, endowed with new power and purpose under the strong personality of its leader. And that section of the Church of England clergy who had maintained a protest against Latitudinarian views, the successors of the true non-Independent Puritans and the progenitors of Low Churchmanship, also felt their sympathies drawn decidedly to Whitefield rather than to Wesley. So, despite the antagonism of the Church of England as an organisation to their evangelistic impulse in general, which they both shared, it was Whitefield's theology of the Atonement which won at first the wider support. Wesley was looked upon askance by Latitudinarians for his "enthusiasm"; by High Church for his pragmatic attitude to ecclesiastical order; and by Low Church and Nonconformity for his Arminian views.



SECTION 11. WESLEY'S CONVERSION AND ARMINIANISM.

It might be supposed that Wesley's conversion in May 1738, being occasioned by his apprehension<sup>1</sup> that salvation from sin was by faith in Christ's atonement alone, and not through a process of high endeavour leading to purity of life and an ultimate consummation of unclouded fellowship with God, would have caused him to adopt that other aspect of the Reformation gospel as expounded by Calvin, pre-eminently jealous for the sovereignty of God in all things, namely an Unconditional Election. That is what occurred in the case of Whitefield and many others. The two doctrines seemed so closely linked that in seizing upon the treasure of the one, they adopted the other as part and parcel of the Gospel that saves. To question Predestination appeared to many who had an evangelical experience of conversion to be to attack the central truth upon which, for themselves and for others, salvation depended. So Wesley writes that he was at a loss, at first, to understand the objections of those who charged him with preaching salvation by works, until he discovered that, "This is the key: Those that hold, Everyone is absolutely predestinated either to salvation or damnation, see no medium between salvation by works, and salvation by absolute decrees".<sup>2</sup> But, as Dr. Bett points out, the

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1. It is difficult to choose the right word here - it was no "discovery", for he had known it before as an intellectual conception.
  2. Works, Vol. XI., p.487. On p. 487 he says, "Let none, therefore, who hold universal redemption be surprised at being charged with this..." (i.e. with teaching Salvation by Works).

doctrine of grace, i.e. of salvation only by God, is not only and specifically Calvinist, but originally Lutheran; is common to all the Reformers and eventually to be traced, (so far as its original formal presentation) to St. Paul, and therefore "That salvation depends wholly on the grace of God, that man is helpless without grace, and that faith is the acceptance of grace, that of the whole of our redemption we must say with the Apostle 'It is of Faith that it might be by Grace' - all this is no more Calvinism than Arminianism".<sup>1.</sup>

### SECTION iii. THE MORAVIAN INFLUENCE.

And, as a matter of historical fact, the Moravians, from whom Wesley received the word which brought him peace with God in 1738, as a result of his association with them on the Atlantic crossing, in America, and in London on his return, did not hold predestinarian views, but preached and taught that salvation was offered to all who believed. Salvation by faith in Christ alone was, of course, the crucial dogma for Wesley. But because faith was the only condition, and a condition with which all might comply, therefore, for the Moravians and Wesley, all men might believe and be saved.<sup>2.</sup> Whereas the Calvinist, Continental or British,

1. Op. cit. p. 152.

2. Wesley parted from the Moravians because they took the argument of "free grace for faith unto all" to the extreme extent designated "stillness"; the doctrine that man has only to believe and wait, to do nothing else, in order to be saved.

began with a dogmatic statement of God's absolute sovereignty and unfettered will, as understood from human analogy and experience, and found himself logically unable to interpret the New Testament statements on the scope of Christ's redemption, except as applying to a predetermined group, without denying his first premise. This analysis must be left here, uncomplete and partial. For the point to the present argument is that Wesley gained his dynamising conviction, that salvation is by faith, from a source which did not offer him absolute predestination also as a "sine qua non" of the central truth. The mind of Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf may safely be taken to represent those of the whole community, and especially of such men as Peter Bohler whose influence was directly responsible for Wesley's conversion. For Zinzendorf was, of course, the founder and spiritual father of the Herrnhut community from which Bohler came, and to which Wesley journeyed immediately after his conversion to see for himself what he believed then to be the most perfect Christian society in existence, and to strengthen his own new conviction.

In his hymn, "Christi Blut und Gerechtigkeit", Zinzendorf is quite explicit :-

"Jesu, be endless praise to Thee,  
Whose boundless mercy hath for me,  
For me and all Thy hands have made,  
An everlasting ransom paid.

"Lord I believe were sinners more  
 Than sands upon the ocean shore  
 Thou hast for all a ransom paid,  
 For all a full atonement made".

So far, some Calvinists might argue that they could accept all this; it is not the sufficiency of Christ's atonement for the sins of all mankind that is in question - but whether or not God intended that atonement to apply to all men.

But:

"Thou God of power, Thou God of love,  
Let the whole world Thy mercy prove!  
Now let Thy word o'er all prevail;  
 Now take the spoils of death and hell".<sup>1.</sup>

So much will suffice to indicate the presence of the doctrine of a General Atonement amongst those Christian truths which must have been the subject of the searching conversations between Wesley and his Moravian friends in the years 1735-1738.

#### SECTION IV. THE INFLUENCE AND BELIEFS OF THE EPWORTH HOME.

But Wesley did not have to wait until his own personal hour of religious crisis before meeting this presentation. Rather, when he found it amongst the Moravians it would be at least one factor in persuading him that here were men with whom he had community of thought, men whom he might trust to lead him onward. For he had been brought up in a home where the Church of England's standards of doctrine, the Articles, Homilies, and Prayer Book, were wholly accepted as normative,

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1. Methodist Hymn Book, Hymn No. 370, Wesley's Translation.



and moreover, interpreted, so far as our particular interest with them lies, in what was then called the "Arminian" manner.

Wesley's own Church could and did teach that salvation was offered to all mankind. It was, particularly, as we have seen in Chapter 1, to be found in the High Church and Latitudinarian groups; with, in fact, the majority of Anglicans, however much the two groups who composed that majority otherwise differed. And Wesley learned to believe in a General Atonement as he learnt his catechism at his mother's knee. The latter phrase is no mere conventional periphrasis. Samuel Wesley would seem to have been content to leave the education of his children to his remarkable wife, while engaged himself with his pastoral duties and poetic and religious writings.<sup>1</sup> But the father did, of course, influence his son's outlook, ~~not~~ <sup>for</sup> least in that he chose/ his partner in life, one whose views were even more "High Church" than his own. And, further, we shall have occasion to note the correspondence between father and son on the Divine Decrees. Samuel Wesley could look back on two generations of Dissenting parents, and he himself received the especial patronage of a group of nonconformists with a view to his becoming one of their pastors. But he became disgusted with their strong antipathy to the Stuarts and the

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1. e.g. His Notes on "Job", which Wesley presented to the Queen, October 1735.

the Episcopacy and, in general, their intolerance in matters of religion. He left the Dissenting academy and, in the face of great obstacles, took his degree at Oxford, and was ordained in the Established Church. This change was thorough, and he became a firm High Churchman and a Jacobite. But he was not so confirmed in this latter view that he could not solicit the favour of a Dutch and Calvinist sovereign and become settled in the living of Epworth, in Lincolnshire. Susanna Annesley, daughter of one of the leading Puritans<sup>1.</sup> of his day, shewed early that strength of character which stood her in good stead during her hard life and in bringing up her large family. Touched, as were many Dissenters of the time, by the breadth of "reason" blowing over the western world, she precociously<sup>2.</sup> inclined to Socinian views. But, after a conscientious examination of the tenets of the Established Church and of the Dissenters. and not unaided, probably, by sympathetic advice from young Samuel Wesley, then sitting at her father's feet in preparation for his proposed entry into Dissenting orders, she joined the Establishment. So strongly did she adhere to High Church views that she became a staunch Jacobite, and early in her married life (for she and Samuel Wesley were married in 1691, after Samuel had become a curate in London) refused to say "Amen" when her husband prayed for

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1. Dr. Samuel Annesley was ejected from the cure of St. Giles, Cripplegate in 1662.

2. At the age of 13.

the King (William III) at evening prayers. So incensed was her husband at her disrespect for those who had been indirectly responsible for their receipt of the living and from whom further patronage might be expected, that, with a statement recently summed up as, "Two kings - two beds",<sup>1</sup> he departed to London to attend Convocation, probably also to seek preferment, and certainly to await modification of his wife's political opinions! However the accession of Anne enabled them to reunite.

It will thus be seen that Mrs. Wesley was of strong will, and a powerful mind. Not only did she reject the Calvinist view of salvation but she was ready with her reasons, as her letters to her son shew. Naturally she taught her children with power and enthusiasm the faith she had adopted, using as text-books the Prayer Book, Homilies, and Articles. It is interesting to note the combination of Puritan and High Church outlook in this remarkable family. In morals the parents were true to their descent, as the rigorous home discipline and their strict views on the use of time in general and on amusements in particular establish. This left its mark on their distinguished son and upon the denomination he founded. Catholicity and toleration in theology united to purity and purpose in personal life, have been willingly accepted by Methodists, when so regarded by observers, as characteristics

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1. G.E. Harrison, "Son to Susanna", p. 24.

of their Church.

Thus, in his own home, Wesley was nurtured on the doctrine of the High Church group and, inter alia, he learned to assume that the object of the Church's ministry was to bring within the fold, and therefore within the all-embracing compass of redemption, men of each and every sort and kind.

#### SECTION v. THE UNIVERSITY.

It is now time to follow Wesley to Oxford. In that University, as Wesley's sermons before it testify, there was little religion or application to study amongst the undergraduates while the dons lived largely apart from the students and the world in general, immersed in academic pursuits. What religion there was, centering around the College Chapels and the weekly University Sermons, was High Churchmanship of an extreme type. Politically, Oxford had not forgotten that Charles I had made it, for a short time, his capital city, and a "sullen Jacobitism" pervaded the University circles. Of Lincoln College, of which foundation in 1726 Wesley became a Fellow, Laver writes that it "had been founded in 1427 for the express purpose of combating the doctrines of Wycliff, and the tone of the institution might still, in the XVIIIth century, be considered anti-Protestant."<sup>1</sup>

While yet in Oxford Wesley conducted a correspondence with

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1. J. Laver, "John Wesley". 1932, p. 36.



his parents upon the characteristic tenets of Geneva. His letters to his mother contain many questions on matters of Christian conduct and morals, but he does not hesitate, either, to seek her advice on such deep theological themes as Predestination. On advice from home, and in preparation for his ordination, he applied himself to devotional literature and in particular to Thomas à Kempis's "De Imitatione Christi", and Bishop Jeremy Taylor's "Holy Living and Holy Dying". In the former he would not of course find Predestination stated in the stark form common in his own day; rather as an implicit assumption that all might take Christ for a pattern to their eternal welfare. A Kempis warns his readers not to spend time on curious questioning as to the deep ways of God with other men, but to think of their own souls. In the latter and later writer we have one of the foremost protagonists of a General Atonement of the age, although this subject is hardly within the scope of the book in mind.

But Wesley's further study of the Thirty-nine Articles, undertaken on the recommendation of his father, provoked, on the 9th July, 1725, a letter home, part of which runs: "What then, shall I say of Predestination? An everlasting purpose of God to deliver some from Damnation does, I suppose, exclude all from that deliverance who are not chosen. And if it was inevitably decreed from all eternity that such a determinate part of mankind should be saved and none beside them, a vast

majority of the world were only born to eternal death, without so much as the possibility of avoiding it. How is this consistent with either the Divine Justice or Mercy? Is it merciful to ordain a creature to everlasting misery? Is it Just to punish a man for crimes he could not but commit? How is man, if necessarily determined to one way of acting, a free agent? To be under either a physical or a moral necessity is entirely repugnant to human liberty. But that God should be the author of sin and injustice - is a contradiction to the clearest ideas we have of the divine nature and perfection. I used to think that the difficulty of Predestination might be solved by supposing that it was indeed decreed from eternity that a remnant should be elected, but that it was in every man's power to be in that remnant. But the words of our Articles will not bear that sense. I see no other way but to allow that some may be saved who were not always of the number of the elect".<sup>1</sup>. To which his mother replied: "The doctrine of Predestination as maintained by rigid Calvinists is very shocking, and ought utterly to be abhorred because it charges the most holy God with being the author of sin..... I do firmly believe that God, from all eternity hath elected some to everlasting life, but then I humbly conceive that this election is founded on His foreknowledge, according to that in the Eighth of Romans, 'Whom He did foreknow.....&c'. Nor can

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1. Letters 1. 22.

it with more reason be supposed that the prescience of God is the cause that so many finally perish, than that our knowing the sun will rise tomorrow is the cause of its rising".<sup>1.</sup>

As mentioned earlier there is evidence that a correspondence took place between Wesley and his father on the same subject. Mrs. Wesley refers to it. But no relevant passages have been found in such reproductions of Samuel Wesley senior's letters as have come under the present writer's notice.

At this early stage, while Wesley was yet a student, the problem of the scope of redemption presented itself to his mind and his convictions became fixed. At this point and throughout his life he appeals for confirmation and defence of his position to the Anglican standards. These thus become the secondary (second, of course, to the Bible) doctrinal standards of the Methodists of Wesley's own lifetime.<sup>2.</sup> Repeatedly his argument is re-inforced by quotations from the Articles, Homilies, and Catechism (and other parts of the Prayer Book) and he is able to achieve more than one sharp debating point in controversies over his publications through the ignorance on the part of Anglican opponents of this origin of paragraphs quoted in his own writings which they have challenged!

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1. Kirk, "The Mother of the Wesleys". 1864, p.284.

2. "The Methodists, so called, observe more of the Articles, Rubrics, and Canons of the Church than any other people in the Three Kingdoms. They vary from none of them willingly, although the English canons have never been established by law". Letters, Vol. VI. p.20. (1771).

Corresponding with "John Smith"<sup>1</sup> in 1745 he asserted that his theology was entirely that of his own Church. In a letter of 30th December<sup>2</sup> he clarifies the position: "In the saying 'I teach the doctrines of the Church of England' I do, and always did, mean (without concerning myself whether others taught them or no, either this year or before the Reformation) I teach the doctrines which are comprised in those Articles and Homilies to which all the clergy of the Church of England solemnly profess to assent, and that in their plain, unforced, grammatical meaning".

The specific point upon which this part of the correspondence turns is Predestination. Did Wesley have some mental reservation in mind as he gave assent to the Anglican Articles on Predestination? Was it by some twisting of meaning, despite the above? The letter continues: "As to the XVIth Article, Mr. Whitefield really believes<sup>3</sup> that it asserts absolute predestination; therefore I can also subscribe to it with sincerity". But Wesley is in no doubt as to the reason why such a dual interpretation is sincerely possible. There is no possible diversity of opinion, he says, on the Articles on <sup>the</sup> Justification of Man

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1. Probably, Thomas Secker, then Bishop of Oxford, later Archbishop of Canterbury.
  2. Letters, Vol. 11, p. 63.
  3. The stress is the present writer's, to clarify the argument.



(i.e. by Faith alone; Nos. XI, XII etc.) for these:  
 "are not ambiguously worded as the Seventeenth (I suppose on purpose) was". Later scholarship confirms Wesley's perception that the XVIth Article lacks precision while understanding more clearly the reasons for this. To the above we may add a phrase from a letter<sup>1</sup> to James Harvey: "Is it, therefore, fair, - for anyone to plead the Articles of our Church in defence of Absolute Predestination, seeing the Seventeenth Article barely defines the term without either affirming or denying the thing, whereas the Thirty-first totally overthrows and razes it from the foundations?"

In general and in particular, Wesley claims that his theology and his belief in a General Offer of Atonement are pure Anglican orthodoxy as expressed in her accepted formulae. Chapters III - V. will be devoted to an attempt to shew that, from the earliest days of the Reformation, and even from an earlier date still, there had been in England a continuous and unbroken stream of thought interpreting the Gospel as an offer of redemption to all who would believe and be saved. Chapter III will attempt to shew how this stream of thought has influenced the very creation of the Anglican standards; so much so that, in the early XVIIIth century it is easy from contemporary literature to discover the existence of a large group - the most influential group - who maintained that these

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1. Letters, Vol. III, p. 379. See also the entry in the Journal for the 19th November, 1768.

same standards set forth the "Arminian" theology. Parallel of course with this tradition there was another, that of the school of Geneva and Augustine, and we shall not be able to do more than assert that, in the conflict of views, room was left, in the framing of the standards, for both schools to be accommodated. Though the words hardly convey the right shade of meaning and now have unhappy associations, we must admit that compromise and comprehension, the marks of the Church of England in later days, have been within that body from the earliest days of its independent existence. and the impulse to them operated upon the majority of those who gave character to Anglicanism. Yet this ambiguity in itself - the very necessity, for instance, for discussion of the Articles that speak directly of (XVIth) or bear indirectly upon the dogma of Predestination, as almost continuously from the time of the original Ten Articles (1536) to our own day they have been discussed in print by both parties - serves to confirm the presence, strength, and continuity of the tradition anachronistically termed "Arminian". When the Articles were in formation there was constant pressure from Geneva but the founders of Anglicanism carefully avoided giving the Church a Calvinist creed. Thus, in the first place, through the media of home and university, Wesley entered into an inheritance of this tradition, and found that those who brought him to the light of the salvation by faith also confirmed him in this heritage.



GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORICAL SURVEY,CHAPTERS 111-V.

The objects of this survey are:

- i. To make clear the existence of the doctrine of a General Atonement within the English Church from the days of the Protestant Reformation and even earlier.
- ii. To discover how far the Anglican doctrinal standards, the Articles, Liturgy and Homilies, were influenced in their formation by this tradition and how far they express the doctrine.
- iii. To trace the passage of Remonstrant ideas from Holland to the British soil and their development there.
- iv. To establish the presence of the doctrine in those strands of Wesley's environment which were determinative in the formation of his theological predispositions and convictions.
- v. To maintain that truth of Wesley's claim that his views on the scope of Redemption were not innovations but the tested and accepted teaching of his own Church and entirely in harmony with the central truths restated at the Reformation.

The political and church history of the times will be mentioned only as it is a necessary framework for the argument and the record of the development of general religious ideas with only slightly more detail.

The books to which the writer is indebted will be found in the list appended to the thesis and the text has not been burdened with footnotes and references where the mass of material is from sources that are wellknown and established authorities. So far as the earlier years are concerned the ground has been thoroughly covered by experts whose work has been utilised here. For the XVllth century a number of contemporary works have been consulted.

## CHAPTER 111.

### THE NATIVE TRADITION OF UNIVERSAL ATONEMENT AND THE ENGLISH FORMULARIES.

#### SECTION 1. LUTHERANISM AND THE "TEN ARTICLES".

It is now generally agreed that the earliest signs of the Reformation Movement, considered both strictly as a reformation of religion and as a political movement for emancipation from bondage to the See of Rome, must be sought for at a time much earlier than 1517, when Luther posted the Ninety-five Theses on the University Notice Board at Wittenberg Parish Church. The seeds of the teaching of the Continental reformers fell on tilled soil when they crossed the Channel. Or, perhaps, more precisely, in the words of Canon Elliott-Binns ".... the Reformation in England, however much it may have been influenced and modified by that on the Continent, was in its origins, a native movement. Long before 1517.... there had been the desire in England for reform...."<sup>1</sup>. We can do no more than refer to the Lollards of the XIVth and XVth centuries and to the "Oxford Reformers", Colet, Erasmus and Sir Thomas More, as amongst the ancestors of those who stood ready to welcome the good news of reform from Germany and Switzerland. Nor must it be forgotten that the Bible was better known in

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1. L. Elliott-Binns, "The Reformation in England", 1937. p.22.

England at this time than had till recently been supposed, and although the limitations of the methods of book production prevented the masses from possessing direct knowledge of the Gospel, there were those who could make direct comparison between Primitive Christianity and the religion of their own day and draw obvious conclusions.

The above glance at pre-Reformation movements has been made in order to emphasise the "English" character of the movement in that country. "But", writes Dr. Elliott-Binns, "with this admission there must go also the recognition that the influence of the great reforming teachers of Europe played a very considerable part in the development of our own movement".<sup>1</sup> Now, the Continental Reformers, though united on the central doctrine of Justification by Faith and on much else that springs therefrom, were by no means uniformly and entirely in agreement, as in the case of Luther and Zwingli on the Eucharist, Grace, and Original Sin - to mention only a few points of difference between them;<sup>2</sup> or Zwingli and Calvin, the latter inheriting the remnants<sup>3</sup> of Zwingli's church group only to harden the theology of the "Reformed"

1. Op. cit. p.23.

2. A.F. Pollard, Cambridge Modern History, Vol. 11. Chap. VII., pp. 206-9, and A.M. Fairbairn, "Christ in Modern Theology", Chap. XI. pp. 344-7.

3. After Zwingli's death at Kappel, October 11th, 1531.

Protestants into a system quite alien in many points to that of the earlier leader. Or, again, let it be remembered that Melanchthon and Luther, the closest collaborators, are by no means to be identified as to their theological views.

The question arises, therefore, as to which section of the Continental reformers the Church of England owes the greatest debt in her reformation. Discussing the influences operating in the reformation of the English Church, Father Piette is satisfied to designate the reformed doctrines generally as "Calvinism". But, as he implies, a distinction between the schools of Geneva and Wittenberg should be made.<sup>1</sup>.

The answer now most generally accepted would be that the influence of the three primary leaders was felt in almost equal proportions - so far as these can be assessed. But the point that is to be made is that, contrary to the strongly expressed opinions of many authorities, the influence of Melanchthon was so great as to beget in England a school of thought on the question of the universal scope of the operation of the Grace of God in the salvation of men which, though not always supreme in the life of the English Church was generally so and finally almost completely won over not only the

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1. Maximin Piette, "Jean Wesley, sa Reaction dans l'Evolution de Protestantisme", 1925. For convenience I have used the English translation (J.B. Howard, 1937); cf. pp. 72 & 99. On p. 78 Father Piette writes, "The Thirty-nine Articles are Calvinist (sic) in origin; but of an emasculated Calvinism, which lacks the doctrine of Predestination". Quite: they are Melanchthonian.



Established Church but also all the Protestant communities of Great Britain and the Western World.<sup>1.</sup>

To the establishment of this thesis it will be necessary now to turn to the age of King Henry Vlll., in whose reign the influence of the Continental Protest began to be felt. Since our interest is limited to one small aspect of the English Reformation the motives underlying the King's action in repudiating the Papal claim of supremacy over the Church in England need not detain us. Fundamentally, the King's reasons for the step were political, not religious; although such a distinction is far harder to draw for the sixteenth than for the twentieth century. But, in his action, he had behind him a large section of the British people, and of these a not unimportant minority had strong sympathies with the religious protest in Germany. By the end of Henry Vlll.'s reign there were Lutheran strongholds in southern and eastern England and many individuals who identified themselves with the leaders of the Continental Movement. Cambridge, then an important port as well as a university town, welcomed the reformed doctrine early. Hidden in the merchandise which came up the river Lynn were Lutheran writings which were readily received by the scholars. So much that a party of students made a

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1. The Lutheran-Melanchthonian influence in England has been traced with thoroughness by H.E. Jacobs, "The Lutheran Movement in England", and by Archbishop Laurence, Bampton Lectures, 1804. Much material has been taken from these sources.

practice of meeting in the White Horse Inn each week to read and discuss the latest material from across the Channel, earning for themselves the nickname "The Germans", and for their meeting-place, that of "Germany". As members of this group we note the names of Ridley, Latimer, and Kilney.

This growth of interest in religious reform reinforced other and more mercenary incentives to the King to take steps to bring the English Church, now with himself as its supreme head, more into line with the Protestantism of the Continent. And so, in 1536, the first of the series of English confessions, the Ten Articles, were promulgated to state "the things that are necessary to salvation".

At this point it is necessary to make a short digression. As later sections will show, it is important to gain some idea of the attitude of those who laid the doctrinal foundations of the Church of England and the evidence for this, in part at least, will be found in the formularies and confessions of the Church. "Articles" or Confessions were produced in large numbers in the Reformation era; they are characteristic of the time. They were forced into being by the necessity for defining the exact opinion of each section of Protestantism as, on the one hand, against the Church of Rome or, on the other, against each other.

It was of course inevitable that this process of organising and stating beliefs should take place, but some

rather unhappy consequences followed from the process. The first of these was that the theology of the Reformation tended to become bound to the declared statements. Little scope or allowance for development of thought or for the incorporation of hitherto neglected aspects of truth was allowed; dogmatism in its most unpleasant form began to pervade the writings and utterances of the Reformed theologians. And the second, a corollary of the above, was that the primary place given by Luther and Calvin and their immediate disciples to the Scriptures as normative and determinative was usurped by the Confessions. Tulloch points out<sup>1</sup> that even Calvin and Luther approached the Bible with preconceived methods of interpretation, through their devotion to Augustine. Though the Protestants loudly proclaimed the supremacy of Scripture, the process of Biblical enquiry had never, until the time of the Remonstrants, been properly carried out by any group of theologians, isolated individuals such as Erasmus, of course, being excepted. This was the fault of the excessive hardening of the Protestant faith in Confessions; in turn, to no small extent arising from polemical necessities. "In point of fact the Confession became the measure of the Word of God and not the Word of God the measure of the Confession".<sup>2</sup> A later opportunity will be found for relating the above to the

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1. "Rational Theology etc. etc.". Vol. 1., p. 20.

2. Op. cit., p. 23.

Arminian protest. Our present interest in the matter is that England was caught up in the prevailing preoccupation with written formularies. "The period of the formulation of the Lutheran tenets (1530-80) corresponds roughly with the period during which the English Church restated her beliefs (1536-71)".<sup>1</sup> Since, as has been mentioned, the theological "tone" of Anglican formularies is of importance to our enquiry, we now turn again to the first of them, the "Ten Articles" of Henry VIII.

In setting about the business of giving his Church a doctrinal standard suitable to the new phase of its life as a member of the group of ecclesiastical communities outside the orbit of Rome Henry was not moved by any desire to copy them closely; rather the reverse. He had no love for Luther, of whom he spoke as "this Cerberus, sprung from the depths of Hell", and against whom, on the occasion of the papal denunciation of 1520, he directed his royal condemnation in the "Assertatio vii. Sacramentorum contra Lutherum"; for which he received from the court of Rome, whose authority and rights over the English Church he was soon to repudiate, the title, "Defender of the Faith". In his own words, he was a King "reckoned somewhat learned, though unworthy, and having so many learned men in his realm, he could not accept at any

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1. B.J. Kidd, "The Thirty-Nine Articles", 1925. p. 8.



creature's hand the observing of his and the realm's faith; but he was willing to confer with learned men sent from them", i.e. from the Lutheran group. And, steps were taken to "confer" with the Lutherans.

Henry's aversion to Luther did not extend to the German's followers. The King exchanged complimentary letters with Melanchthon and allowed the latter's "Commonplaces" to be dedicated to him. Melanchthon received a warm invitation to come to England, more than once repeated and that with urgency. That Melanchthon never did arrive in England was due, partly, to the urgent matters detaining him in his own country<sup>1</sup> and in the last event, to the death of Edward, towards the end of whose reign he was actually appointed Professor of Divinity at Cambridge (May 1533), so certain were the English Divines that they had at last secured his presence.

But, if Melanchthon would not come to England, the English could and would visit Germany, and in 1535 a deputation consisting of Foxe, later Bishop of Hereford, Robert Barnes and the Archdeacon of Canterbury, Heath, met the Lutherans at Schmalkald. It is quite certain that the object of this mission, so far as the King was concerned, was to get the Protestant allies committed in support of his divorce from Catherine of Aragon. This does not invalidate our argument

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1. It is probable that Melanchthon was not very anxious to undertake a journey not without hazards or to leave the work in Germany at this critical stage.



that, immediately prior to the formation of the Ten Articles, there was considerable contact between the Church of England and the Lutherans, especially Melanchthon and those in close sympathy with his views.

The 1536 Articles, necessitated immediately by the King's policy of a Protestant alliance, and by the prevalence of Lutheran literature in the country, differed little from the hitherto accepted creed of the English Church, but the differences were significant. The omissions, made to give them a "reformed" appearance, are well-known but it is Article Five which chiefly interests us, the Article on Justification. Justification is stated (1) to be the remission of sin and acceptance of reconciliation into God's Grace and favour, our perfect renovation in Christ. (2) It is attained by Contrition and Faith and Charity, but Charity (i.e. Good Works) do not "deserve" or merit Justification but are required by God as an accompanying "condition" of Justification. We can hardly imagine Calvin being satisfied with such a definition; or, for that matter, Luther and many of his followers. But here we may see, as Laurence<sup>1</sup> and others have pointed out, the hand of "Master Philip Melanchthon"; the former having noticed the correspondence between this Article and a definition in the Commonplaces.

Following the Ten Articles "devised by the King's Highness

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1. Archbishop Laurence, op. cit. p.119 & 202.

to stablish Christian quietness and unity among us", there followed a period of serious unrest! For this the dissolution of the monastries was largely responsible, but many serious people resented any change being made in the faith and order of the Church while others were for yet more radical reform.

The re-issue of the Ten Articles in 1537 in a revised form and under the name of the "Institutes of a Christian Man" and commonly called "the Bishops' Book" may be noted in passing. A further issue in 1543 was styled "the King's Book". This (1537) was also the year in which the northern discontent, which in 1536 had produced the Pilgrimage of Grace, was finally suppressed.

The projected alliance of Henry with the Schmalkaldic League stranding upon the rock of ceremonies and doctrine, in 1538 a Lutheran embassy, consisting of Buckhardt, Boyneburg and Myconius visited England for conferences with the King and Cranmer. These Conferences produced no set of articles agreeable to both parties, but we learn that, on doctrinal fundamentals it was possible to settle certain "agreed articles", the split coming on the matter of ritual, whereon the Lutherans, with justification, considered the English to be nothing advanced beyond Rome.

The above "agreed" articles exist in draft amongst Archbishop Cranmer's papers and enable us to see that to a great extent, they form the basis of the "Forty-two Articles" of 1552. They may conveniently be referred to as the

"Thirteen Articles" and were based almost entirely on the language of the Augsburg Convention. "No one can deny" says Hardwick "that the compilers of the Forty-two Articles in the reign of Edward VI. drew largely from the Lutheran formulary of 1530" (The Augsburg Confession) "but the..... discovery of the Thirteen Articles has made it probable that such derivation took place entirely through the medium of the Anglo-German channel".<sup>1.</sup>

A general comment of Hardwick's on the position at the end of Henry VIII's reign is apposite: He says, that in view of the moderation of the Lutherans, "we are not surprised to witness the increasing confidence reposed in them by many of our cautious fellow-countrymen who had no dealings with the school of Zwingli and the other Swiss reformers".<sup>2.</sup>

During the reign above considered two names occur which are deserving of some special mention, those of <sup>Thomas</sup> Cromwell and Cranmer, but the latter we shall meet again in the time of Edward VI.

Cromwell, whether from motives of religion, of political expediency or of private gain it is not our interest to determine, consistently sought to strengthen the bonds between the English Church and the Continental Reformers. The King, while using Cromwell, seems to have acted rather against his

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1. C. Hardwick, "A History of the Articles of Religion", 3rd. Edition, 1876, p. 61.
  2. Op. cit., p. 53.

own inclinations in this direction but the connection outlined above existed nevertheless.

The important point is that the connection was with members and sections of the reformed communion who did not accept the extreme views of Calvin on Grace and Predestination. The Lutheran School, under Melanchthon, had moderated its position from that of Luther himself on this item. The affinities of the Lutheran were here with the Zwinglians rather than the Calvinists but the matter of the doctrine of the Sacraments caused these two parties to diverge. Melanchthon, through the Augsburg Confession (it was almost entirely his production) thus exerted a considerable influence upon the mind of the English Churchmen and in such a manner that, reinforcing the earlier and native tendencies, the Anglican fathers were careful to avoid tying the English Church to the doctrine of Absolute Predestination, which became especially indented with Calvin's peculiar system.

But direct influence of the authorised formularies of Henry VIII's reign upon later English statements there was little. The "Six Articles"<sup>1</sup> of 1539, do not touch the subject of our special interest and were never really operative, and the "Ten Articles" only bear the slightest relationship to Edward's "~~XX~~ XI" Articles.

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1. These have not been hitherto mentioned. They were a very conservative statement and introduced by the King to assert the "Catholicity" of the English Church in face of his excommunication.



## SECTION 11. CRANMER AND THE "XLII ARTICLES".

The reign of Edward VI (1547-1553) witnessed a rapid development of reform and closer relations with the continent than Henry VIII. had permitted, and two very important doctrinal standards, the Prayer Book and the "XLII Articles" came into being.

The Catholic party, which had suffered rebuff at the end of the last reign, remained more or less in eclipse throughout the present one. A number of Protestant sympathisers who had gone abroad to seek a more congenial religious atmosphere, returned to England and formed an active and vociferous if not numerically large party on the side of more radical assimilation of Church of England doctrine and practice to that of the European model. Cranmer, of whom more anon, was amongst those who encouraged and invited Continental divines to visit this country.<sup>1</sup> Heylyn, after giving a long account of Calvin's Predestinarian teaching and its implications, remarks, "I had not stood so long upon this particular, but in regard of those confusions and distractions which by his" (Calvin's) "followers have been occasioned in the Church" (of England) "by their adhering to this doctrine and labouring to obtrude it upon all men's consciences. The 'Zwinglian Gospellers',<sup>2</sup> as Bishop Hooper rightly calls them, began to

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1. A.F. Pollard, Cambridge Modern History, Vol. 11, pp. 478 ff.
  2. In Hooper's day the name of Zwingli was commonly lent to the Genevan form of reformed doctrine. Although the writer has not been able to satisfy himself completely on this point it seems probable that Zwingli should not be saddled with Calvin's Predestinarian views. However, for some time, in this country, "Zwinglian" and "Calvanist" were synonymous terms.



scatter their predestinarian Doctrines in the reign of King Edward. But they effected little in it.....".<sup>1.</sup>

Notable among the foreign settlers<sup>2.</sup> were three, Martin Bucer, who, arriving in 1549, went to Cambridge and became Professor of Divinity, Peter Martyr, who took a similar post at Oxford in 1547, and John a'Lasco, a Pole of strong Calvinian sympathies (1548) who became minister of the "Strangers' Church" in London. The latter was to be largely responsible for Heylyn's strictures and verdict noted above, but the two former were to have some influence upon the doctrine of the Church of their adopted country.

The change of ecclesiastical climate was due to (1) the Protestant predominance in the Regency Council; Henry VIII having been, as we have noted, most suspicious of the Catholic party's intentions; (2) the Protestant sympathies of the first Protector, Somerset, of his successor, Warwick (for political reasons here - Warwick was probably Catholic in his private beliefs), and of Cranmer and his friends; and (3) the Protestant upbringing of the young King.

Somerset's first act had been to relax most of the

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1. Peter Heylyn, "Arius Redivivus", 1670 Edition, p. 21. Heylyn was a stout defender of the contention that the English Church had never accepted Unconditional Predestination. His "Quinqu Articularis" and "Cyprianus Anglicanus" are also useful and interesting.
  2. With the three named, Cranmer also had the advice, in compiling the Prayer Book, of Ochino, from Augsburg, Peter Alexander, from Holland, Dryander, a Spaniard, and Tremellio, an Italian. Cranmer wished to get Melancthon over to hold a conference to compose a formula for general, not merely English, acceptance. Cf. C.H. Smyth, "Cranmer and the Reformation", 1926, p.38. Mr. Smyth adds (p.39) "The Swiss were not represented, partly because Cranmer had no sympathy for their theology.....".

penalties imposed by Cromwell upon those who in any way shewed a dislike of Henry VIII's settlement. But, notes Canon Elliott-Binns, there is no proof that Somerset was even Calvinistically inclined.<sup>1</sup> The downfall of Somerset and the rise of Warwick gave hopes to the Catholics, but the new dictator realised the strength of the reforming sentiment in the country and favoured the more extreme section cent<sup>e</sup>red around Hooper.

However the outstanding name of the reign is that of Cranmer. His hand had played a large part in determining Henry's settlement, the invocation of overseas advice in the formation of the "Ten Articles" and in the other determinative religious publications of that same reign. But, under Edward VI, he was able to make a monumental contribution to the ordering of the Post-Reformation English Church. And there can be no doubt that his Continental connections and sympathies lay with those who could not accept the extreme doctrines on Grace and the Eternal Decrees now hardened under Calvin in the Reformed (to accept the term in the narrowest sense, and in contradistinction to the Lutheran) Churches. On the accession of Edward VI he published an "English Catechism", a translation of one composed by Justin Jonas the Elder, who had been a friend of Luther's, and his views, except on the Eucharist, remained substantially those of the modified Lutheranism of Melancthon to the end. These two men, Melancthon and Cranmer,

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1. "The Reformation &c.", p. 99.

maintained a continuous and cordial correspondence. A study of the legislation on ceremonies, vestments and the development of the English doctrine of the Eucharist will not be attempted, but here again Cranmer's two-fold respect for the traditions of the English Church and for the Melanchthonian school can be seen.

The "Homilies" of the Church, which we meet repeatedly in Wesley's writings, were almost wholly Cranmer's work. With Bucer and Peter Martyr he began that revision of the Prayer Book which became established by the Act of Uniformity of January 1549. Though the book was short-lived, its appearance is of great importance as marking a stage in the development of the English Church. The world was presented with a document in which the peculiar and positive characteristics of that community were for the first time (for the Ten Articles were conservatively negative rather than indicative of what the Church was to be), if only in an incomplete form, made clear.

From what sources did Cranmer draw his material? In the first place, from old English ones such as the Sarum Breviary; in the second, from a Lutheran service book compiled by Archbishop Hermann of Cologne and from Luther's Nuremberg Liturgy; in the third place from his own compositions. Today Christians of all English-speaking communions unite in acknowledging their debt to Cranmer for the beauty of language and the devotion of the matter in the collects of the Prayer

Book.

But the pressure for further reform was strong, and in January 1552 Parliament passed yet another Act of Uniformity imposing the acceptance of the "Second Prayer Book" throughout the English Church. The revision was again largely Cranmer's work, though Bucer and Ridley collaborated. Thus came into being the Book of Common Prayer which is still in use in the Church of England and which has occasioned no small controversy in recent years.

Six months later the "XLII Articles" appeared, and were in force from that time (1552<sup>1</sup>) until 1571. Again the question is put: what were the antecedents of this formulary? Cranmer had used, in his own diocese, a series of forty-five articles which he, in 1551, submitted to his fellow Bishops for examination with a view to their wider use. These, as revised and curtailed, received a royal sanction, but no traces of any approval by Convocation seems to have been found.<sup>2</sup>

The relation of these articles to Lutheran sources must now be noted. Twelve Articles,<sup>3</sup> (Nos. I, II, VIII, IX, X, XV, XVII, XX, XXIV, and three later ones) use the Augsburg phraseology to a greater or lesser degree, in some places word for word, and others shew internal evidence of the same source

1. Kidd, op. cit., gives the date as 1553 for the publication and sanction of these Articles.
2. There has been considerable discussion upon this but the results are not relevant here.
3. Kidd says only six, but other sources give good evidence for the figure names.



of inspiration. We now remember what has been stated in respect of the "Thirteen Articles", and the link between the "XXIII Articles" and the Augsburg Confession through the "Thirteen" is clear. The clauses common to the Augsburg Confession and the "XLIII Articles" appear in the "XLIII Articles" also. Cranmer, it seems, embodied the "Thirteen" in his "XLV" and these, in turn, formed the basis of the "XLIII Articles" of 1552.

But what of any Genevan influence? On Bucer's appointment to Cambridge Calvin immediately wrote to him warning him against "moderation"; urging him to press for a complete "reformation" of belief and practice in England on the Genevan model. Bucer, however, found the English attitude more to his liking than Calvin's. Somerset had forwarded a translation of the Liturgy to Geneva for comment, which was unfavourable. Calvin had already offered his services (1547) in the revision of the English formularies, but they were not accepted as his anti-Episcopal views were naturally suspect. He continued to write, however, pressing for more radical changes in doctrine and church order, to the Council, to the English divines, and to the King. His agents, Nicholas and a'Lasco, also kept watch on the progress of events and did all they could, but without notable success, so far as the Prayer Book and the Articles were concerned.

However, the Genevan party in the country while never



dominant was by no means inconsiderable. At this time the Swiss and Saxon (or Lutheran) factions were struggling for ascendancy in England, especially on the question of whether the Sacraments conferred Grace. This is interesting to us, as the school of Calvin, fettered by the doctrine of the Decrees, was, of course, only able to accept Baptism and the Eucharist as "obsignatory" of grace otherwise received. Cranmer avoided the phrase they objected to, but this was the utmost concession they could gain. For he used phrases which implied, at least, the rejection of the Calvinistic view of the operation of Grace, such as, "Sacraments be effectual signs of grace" (Art. 26); and, "Baptism.... whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted in the Church" (Art. 28).

On the Article on Justification (No. XI), Kidd's view is that, as the language is not that used in the XIII Articles, it reveals the growing dislike of Cranmer and his favourite associates for the Reformation doctrines on Justification. It is accepted that Cranmer did avoid the use of phrases drawn from Continental sources. And also, that the attitude of the English Church leaders of the period was one of great respect for the traditional views, and for the phraseology of the undivided Church, coupled with a desire to maintain a position of independence from any of the Continental schools. It still remains true that the teaching of Melancthon, whose rejection of Lutheran and Calvinistic extreme solifidianism

is expressed in the Augsburg Confession and needs no further proof here, exercised a great influence upon the Edwardian theologians. And thus the two influences combined at this point, as at others, to exclude from the English statements of faith the doctrines of man's Justification and Sanctification and cognate points in the form peculiar to Calvinistic theology. And, furthermore, we here see the rise of that section of the Anglican Church which, despite all the vicissitudes of intervening centuries, consistently maintained, (1) the teaching of God's offer of salvation to all men; and (2) that the English standards were so drawn up as to state these doctrines and make them true expressions of the mind of the Church.

In respect of the doctrines with which we are particularly concerned, Original Sin, Grace and the Divine Decrees, it can be said that, as the appended table shews,<sup>1</sup> the position as found in the "XXXIX Articles" of Elizabeth is that of the earliest group in the series, namely, the "thirteen agreed" doctrinal articles of the Anglo-German conference of 1535-6. Hence, when we have considered the relation of the "XXXIX Articles" to their predecessors we shall have established the source of the Church of England's teaching so far as it is embodied in her legally established formularies.

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1. The table is to be found at the end of the Chapter.

SECTION iii. FINALISATION OF THE STANDARDS.

Edward VI. dying in 1553, and the pathetic interlude of the "Nine Day's Queen" over, the crown passed, not without popular approval, to Mary. As this period is wholly one of reaction in religion it need not detain us. Material for our main purpose, of course, there is little. We note the imprisonment and death of Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley; the restoration of the Mass and Roman practice; the abolition of Edward VI's measures; and the acceptance once again of Papal supremacy. But what is of some importance is the fate of some of the Protestant sympathisers, those who fled overseas. They made their way to Geneva, Frankfurt, Basle, Strasburg, etc., centres of the reformed theologies, and there set up Church communities which fostered an attitude to the English Church and its beliefs and practice that was to make no small stir on the return of the exiles in Elizabeth's reign. The Lutherans, generally, did not welcome the exiles, the beliefs of the English on the Eucharist and Predestination being more allied<sup>1.</sup> to the Reformed doctrines. But Melanchthon interceded for them (Melanchthon was a warm friend<sup>n</sup> to many things English) at Wesel and Frankfurt. The most interesting but very involved story of these exiled communities<sup>2.</sup> however, does shew that they gained little from the moderate Lutheran views, and

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2. This subject has been fully treated by C.H. Smyth, "Cranmer and the Reformation". 1926.

1. It was, of course, upon the most radical, the "Genevan", theologians that the force of the Marian persecution fell earliest and most severely.

returned to England even more strongly in favour of Geneva's faith and civil government than when they made their outward channel crossing. Allowing the imagination a moment's play, it is an intriguing thought that the peace of the Church and the interests of true religion might have been served if our Elizabethan forebears had known something of present-day vicissitudes of Continental travel and could have instituted some kind of doctrinal Customs examination!

The analysis of the character, motives and sentiments of Elizabeth has baffled historians as it did her contemporaries, and that especially where religion is concerned. She had been brought up under strong Protestant influences and knew, whether she liked them or not, a good deal of the contents of Melanchthon's "Commonplaces". It is certain that a great deal of her time was spent in curbing the rising demand for the further reform of the Church. But then, were not the Calvinists anxious to remove ecclesiastical jurisdiction not only from the Bishops but also from the Crown? No Tudor could feel sympathetic towards a man, however 'right' his other views might appear, who avowedly desired to curtail the royal prerogatives.

But the position in Church and state as inherited by Elizabeth demanded change. To share the government of her realm with the Pope was no more to Elizabeth's taste than a partnership with Presbytery. Papal supremacy was repudiated. The Act of Uniformity of 1559 restored the Prayer Book and,



in 1563, the Convocation met to revise the LXXI Articles. The imposition of the Prayer Book was not acceptable to the Marian Bishops, most of whom suffered deprivation. This, with other causes, left the Episcopal Bench almost vacant. Parker, one of the rising Cambridge School, who had been one of the Queen's instructors, became Archbishop of Canterbury, an appointment which was to be of great importance in preserving the native character of the English Church. He, though a zealous reformer, did not espouse the Calvinist views of God's dealings with mankind. Others consecrated were Grindal (to London), Cox, who had been prominent in the Frankfurt Church as the opponent of those who had striven to make that community Presbyterian (to Ely), and Jewel, an Oxford scholar of vast learning especially in Biblical and Patristic studies (to Salisbury). Jewel it was who undertook the revision of the Homilies and who published the monumental "Apology for the Church of England". Further, it was he who guided and encouraged Hooker in his early days and whose influence can be traced in the most important book of the age, the "Ecclesiastical Polity". Hooker's book and Jewel's own did much to define the Anglican position as based on the Christianity of the Primitive Church and the Word of God.

All the above, with most of their episcopal colleagues and the higher dignitaries of the Church, were strong advocates of the doctrine of the Universal Offer of Salvation in Christ. But the same was not true of a large number of the parish clergy, or



for a time, of the University dons. The necessity for filling many posts made vacant by the persecutions of the previous reign and by various other causes allowed the appointment of large numbers of illiterate and often unsympathetic persons to benefices. There were some glaring cases of unordained men holding positions of importance in the Church. There was, as a result of this widespread divergence between the mind of the leaders and of the led, a very great diversity of belief and practice in the Church of this age. So much so that in 1566 Parker published his "Advertisements" in an attempt to secure greater homogeneity.

The large and active group who advocated the introduction of the full Presbyterian system in England reached the height of power at this time. In a large measure the points which were most at issue were the Episcopacy<sup>1</sup> and matters of ceremonial, vestments, and the Eucharist. But the Predestinarian issue soon became equally a subject of hot debate. The Prayer Book they called "an imperfect book culled and picked out of the Popish dunghill". The doctrinal Articles, as well as those on polity, were strongly challenged as inconsistent with the doctrines of Predestination and Reprobation. In the second of the two Puritan (for this name see later) "Admonitions to Parliament" (1572) the following phrase is found: "Indeed the book of the Articles of

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1. Cf. The Marprelate Tracts.

Christian religion speaketh very dangerously of falling from grace".<sup>1.</sup>

Parallel with this we must notice the rise of the "shadow" presbytery - an organisation of the Calvinist clergy in various districts into presbyteries which held regular meetings for "propheying" and for the determining of the affairs of their own Churches. These presbyteries were within the episcopal framework; in no sense did their originators desire to forfeit their opportunity of disseminating their doctrines by coming under the laws directed against those who were not within the national church. Many, probably, felt that some place for episcopacy could be found within a presbyterian system. At any rate the theology of Calvin on Grace began to be held by two groups, one of which repudiated their master's opinions on Church government and remained historically within the Anglican communion; the other group which accepted presbyterianism (strictly) and, by degrees, was to be found in Dissent.<sup>2.</sup> The party name "Puritan" was first heard, Kidd tells us, in 1564. It arose as descriptive of the "scruples" of Bishop Hooper and a large number of the clergy concerning vestments, ornaments, and rites of worship. John Knox, whose early activities belong to English rather than Scottish history and who nearly became

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1. Calvinism, of course, held Grace to be irresistable.

2. A third conception of Church polity began to be of importance about this time - the Independent or "congregational" view.

an English Bishop, played no small part in the matter. The Puritans of this reign, though the term later had a wider application, were the Calvinist school within the Church.

In the Universities the "Institutes" of Calvin were the standard theological textbook. The divinity professors and their pupils, during the major part of the reign, were ardent reformers of the Genevan sort. But it was in the Universities that the reaction against Calvinism began and upon the issue of Predestination. After saying that "hitherto, much English theology had been dominated by the commanding influence of Calvin" Frere<sup>1</sup> continues, "but the last years of the century witnessed the beginnings of a rebellion. At Cambridge there had, for some time been a marked divergence of opinion between Whitaker, the Regius and Baro, the Margaret Professor of Divinity".

Matters came to a head when a young ordinand, William Barrett, in a B.D. exercise (1595), publicly denied the certainty of Assurance and Final Perseverance and asserted that Sin alone is the cause of Reprobation. Since Barrett did not scruple to cite for condemnation, Calvin's, amongst other great names, the business could not be confined to the statutory "five miles from Great St. Mary's Church". A recantation was compelled from Barrett (after all, his degree and career were at stake!) but this only brought into vigorous activity of pen

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1. W.H. Frere, "The History of the English Church, 1558-1625". 1904, p. 282.

and tongue those who were prepared to support him in his proclaimed views. Whitgift, now Archbishop of the Southern Province, and Lord Chancellor Burleigh became involved. The former is charged with strong leanings to Calvinism and certainly the "Nine Articles" which bear the name of his palace at Lambeth and which it was intended to enforce as a test upon the University members, are the most extreme Predestinarian statement that can be found amongst the English formulae.<sup>1</sup> However this was not to Elizabeth's liking, and both Barrett and the Archbishop received a royal admonition. The Lambeth Articles were never enforced, the sympathies of the University now increasingly being with the milder conceptions of the Divine Activity as held by the "Anglican" (rather than "Puritan") element.

The dispute did however occasion the resignation of Peter Baro.<sup>2</sup> But Andrewes, of saintly memory, and Overall<sup>3</sup> remained in the University to be the leaders of that rapidly growing tide of thought which, taking as its basis the appeal to

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1. Dr. Frere says that Whitgift was not an extreme Calvinist in doctrine. Although the "Lambeth Articles" seem to be extremely Predestinarian, even they are, in fact, a compromise as Whitgift's influence moderated them as against the demands of the Predestinarians.
  2. Peter Baro fled to England from his own University of Bourges on account of his Protestantism. J. Nichols, translation of "The Works of Arminius", Vol. 1, p. 91, quotes a letter from Baro containing a summary of current opinions on the Decrees. Baro cites as his own views the opinion which makes Christ the cause of Election and teaches Universal Atonement. This opinion, he says, was Melanchthon's. Baro's influence is largely responsible for the change of opinion in Cambridge.
  3. With Hooker at Oxford.



Scripture and Primitive Christianity, was to make the preaching and teaching of "Free Grace offered for All" one of its main emphases.<sup>1.</sup>

The Genevan school had passed the zenith of its influence, the interlude of the Protectorate excepted; though the conclusion of the present writer is that the main stream of development of the Anglican theology was almost undisturbed by that interlude, however greatly religion in general and the nation as a whole may be indebted to that Puritan interregnum.

Before turning to the reign of James VI and I, and the impact of the Remonstrance Protest upon English religion a little space must be given to the "XXXIX Articles". As we have seen, these were the production of Convocation of the year 1563-4. They are, in the main, the work of Archbishop Parker with the help of Guest. About 1560 Parker had used, in his own Visitations, a set of "Eleven Articles" which are of interest as exhibiting his sympathies with the Melanchthonian view of the Decrees and, hence, the predisposition with which he approached the task of revising the "XLII Articles". We may disregard the details of the stages of the revisionary process and summarise the final changes as they have interest for us.

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1. Heylyn, "Quinqu Articularis", gives many quotations from contemporary sermons to shew the prevalence of these doctrines at this period.



In general, seven of the "XLll Articles"<sup>1</sup> were omitted, four new ones added,<sup>2</sup> and seventeen others modified. The new material was in part original to the editors, and in part taken from the Confession of Wurtemberg<sup>3</sup> (1552) a Lutheran formulary based on the Augsburg symbol. This is the second and last occasion on which the Articles were directly influenced by a Lutheran source. We may confine our attention to the Eleven Articles (Nos. Vlll-XVlll) of the 1553 series and their parallels (Nos. lX-XVlll inclusive) of the final set of 1571 - those dealing directly with God's activity in the salvation of the soul of man. The examination of the separate Articles is appended in tabular form. Some general comments may be added.

In the first place, there is little sign that the Calvinists section of the Church had any part in determining their contents.<sup>4</sup> Secondly, and per contra, the Articles are certainly not Roman in tone. But they do reflect the tendency that we have noted before in the reformed English Church, to return to the Bible and the Patristic Age for inspiration and language in forming a theology. Lastly, we

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1. Nos. X, XVI, XIX, XXXIX, XL, XLI, XLII.
  2. Nos. V. (of the Holy Ghost), XII. (of Good Works), XXIX. (of the Wicked, etc.), XXX. (of both kinds).
  3. Archbishop Laurence, op. cit., has drawn out the comparison of the Wurtemberg, and the added material in the "XXXIX" Articles in detail.
  4. Archdeacon Hardwick states, with contemporary evidence in support, that Parker and his friends did not draw in their revision of the "XLll Articles", on Swiss but on Saxon sources.

do ~~not~~ find here, as we might have expected from Wesley's repeated appeal to the Articles in support of his views, the doctrines of Man's lost state, of God's eternal purpose of salvation, and the ways in which, through Christ crucified and the Holy Spirit the two come together, so far as human understanding can conceive them, stated in the form which, apart from slight differences, readily assumed the designation "Arminian" when that term came into use in the following reign.<sup>1</sup>

Here the doctrines which are peculiarly those of the Church of England, so far as they are symbolically expressed at all, are to be found in the forms which have remained untouched for three hundred years; i.e. in the "Articles, Homilies and Liturgy", to use Wesley's oft-repeated phrase. If his claim be true that here he found the materials (nobody would assert, especially after a careful study of the Articles, even apart from the known facts of the case, that they gave him his inspiration!) of his message, it will be possible to verify that claim by putting side by side these standards and Wesley's own views. It remains now to note (1) the coming of "Arminianism" to England and to trace the connection of the

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1. Canon Kidd's verdict is categorical, "That interpretation of them (the Articles) to which Laud and his friends first recalled attention, is the one since vindicated as historically correct". "The Thirty-Nine Articles", p. 62.

three, namely (1) The Anglican Standards and the native tradition of a Universal Atonement as preserved and consistently accepted by a characteristic section of the Church; (2) The teaching of Arminius; and (3) the theology of Wesley himself.

TABULAR DESCRIPTION OF THE SOURCES  
OF THE RELEVANT ARTICLES OF "THE THIRTY-NINE".

<u>No. of Article.</u>	<u>Subject &amp; Article.</u>	<u>Source.</u>	<u>Notes.</u>
9.	<u>Peccatum Originale.</u>		
1.	Peccatum Originis non est ut fabulantur Pelagiani in imitatione Adami situm, sed est vitium et depravation naturae cujuslibet hominis ex Adamo naturaliter propagati, qua fit ut ab originali justitia quam longissime distet, ad malum sua matura propendeat, et caro semper adversus spiritum concupiscat; unde in unoquoque nascentium iram Dei atque damnationem meretur.	The 8th of the "XIII Articles". But omits a phrase condemning Anabaptist views.	By 1571 the Anabaptist heresy was negligible. <u>Note</u> 1. Original Sin is Universal. 2. But not a total corruption of human will and nature - "longissime distet" 3. Man <u>inclines</u> (propendeat) to evil (rather than being bound to evil) and therefore deserves God's condemnation. 4. Original sin is present in the regenerate. 5. Although the baptised believer is not condemned yet lust is called sin by Paul.
2.	Manet etiam in renatis haec naturae depravatio, qua fit ut affectus carnis, Graece (quod alii sapientiam, alii sensum, alii affectum alii studium carnis interpretantur) legi Dei non subjiciatur. Et quanquam renatis et credentibus, nulla propter Christum est condemnatio peccati tamen sese rationem habere concupiscentiam fatetur Apostolus.		

10. De Libero Arbitrio.

1. <sup>x</sup> Ea est hominis post lapsum Adami conditio<sup>x</sup> ut sese, naturalibus suis viribus et bonis operibus ad fidem et invocationem Dei convertere ac praeparare non possit.
2. Quare absque gratia Dei, quae per Christum est, nos praeveniente ut velimus et cooperante dum volumus ad pietatis opera facienda quae Deo grata sint et accepta, nihil valeamus.

The first clause (<sup>xx</sup>) from the Wurttemberg Confession. The remainder from Art. 9 of the "LXII".

Note.

1. The Wurttemberg clause inserted to assert unequivocally that natural man is impotent to repent and that Justification by works is impossible.
2. Man needs preventing grace to have a will to good.

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The Tenth Article of the "LXII" "de Gratia" is omitted from the "XXXIX".

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11. De Hominis Justificatione.

1. <sup>x</sup> Tantum propter meritum Domini ac Servatoris nostri Jesu Christi, per fidem, non propter opera et merita
2. nostra just coram Deo reputamur.<sup>x</sup>
3. Quare sola fide nos justificari, doctrina est saluberrima ac consolatione plenissima; ut in Homilia de Justificatione hominis fusius explicatur.

First clause (<sup>xx</sup>) from Wurttemberg Confession. The rest rewritten from "LXII" No. 11.

Re-written in Scriptural language to guard against a perverted "sola fide" interpretation. (i.e., making faith the cause of Justification.)

Note.

1. The Cause of our Justification is Christ's Merit.
  2. The only Condition is our Faith.
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12. De Bonis Operibus.

1. <sup>x</sup> Bona opera, quae sunt fructus fidei et justificatos sequuntur, quanquam peccata nostra expiare et divini iudicii severitatem ferre non possunt<sup>x</sup>, Deo tamen grata sunt et accepta in Christo, atque ex vera et viva fide necessario profluunt, ut plane ex illis aequae fides viva cognosci possit atque arbor ex fructu judicari.
- Does not appear in the "LXI1". First clause (<sup>xx</sup>) from Confession of Wurtemberg. The rest original.

Inserted to secure the position between Rome and the perverted solifidianism referred to above.

Note.

1. Good Works are a necessary fruit of true faith.
2. They do not Justify.
3. But they are pleasing to God. (By implication from Articles X and XI and the present, they are required by God in so far as He is the ultimate source of them.)

13. De Operibus ante Justificatione.

Opera quae fiunt ante gratiam Christi et Spiritus ejus afflatum, cum ex fide Jesu Christi non prodeant, minime Deo grata sunt, neque gratiam (ut Multi vocant) de congruo merentur: imo cum non sint facta ut Deus illa fieri voluit et praecepit, peccati rationem habere non dubitamus.

"LXI1"  
verbatim.

Note.

1. "before the Grace of Christ", does not exclude acceptable good works before Justification.  
Cf. Prevenient Grace (Art. X).

14. De Operibus Supererogationibus.

Opera quae Supererogationis appellant non possunt sine arrogantia et impietate praedicari. Nam illis declarant homines non tantum se Deo reddere quae tenentur, sed plus in ejus gratiam facere quam deberent: cum aperte Christus dicat: Cum feceritis omnia quaecunque praecepta sunt vobis, Servi inutiles sumus.

"LXII"  
Verbatim.

Note.

The possibility of works of Supererogation is emphatically denied.

15. De Christo qui solus est sine Peccato.

1. Christus in nostrae naturae veritate per omnia similis factus est nobis, excepto in peccato, a quo prorsus est immunis, tum in carne tum in spiritu. Venit ut agnus absque macula esset, qui mundi peccata per immolationem sui semel factam tolleret: et peccatum, ut inquit Johannes, in eo non erat. Sed nos reliqui, etiam baptizati et in Christo regenerati, in multis tamen offendimus omnes: et si dixerimus quia peccatum non habemus, nos ipsos seducimus et veritas in nobis non est.

"LXII"  
verbatim.

Note.

Even the regenerate are not free from sin. Christ alone was sinless.

16. De Peccato post Baptismum.

1. Non omne peccatum mortale post Baptismum voluntarie perpretatum est peccatum in Spiritu Sanctum et irre-missibile. Proinde lapsis a Baptismo in peccata locus penitentiae non est negandus
2. Post acceptum Spiritum Sanctum possumus a gratia data recedere atque peccare, denuoque per gratiam Dei resurgere ac resipicere Ideoque illi dammandi sunt qui se quamdiu hic vivant, amplius non posse peccare affirmant, aut vere resipiscentibus veniae locum denegant.

"LXI1"  
verbatim.

Note.

1. But (supra) repentance and restoration is possible for regenerate sinners.
2. Condemns the teaching that the regenerate cannot fall from grace in this life, but does not state the Calvinist position, that the regenerate must (Art. "possumus") inevitably be restored from any defection from Grace; Final Perseverance is made conditional.

17. De Praedestinatione et Electione.

1. Praedestination ad vitam est aeternum Dei propositum quo, ante jacta mundi fundamenta, suo consilio, nobis quidem occulto constanter decrevit eos, quos <sup>x</sup>in Christo<sup>x</sup> elegit ex hominum genere, a maledicto et exilio liberare, atque ut

No. XVI1

"LXI1"

verbatim  
except:

1. Addition of <sup>x</sup>in Christo<sup>x</sup>
2. Omission of <sup>xx</sup>"licet Praedes-  
tinationis  
decreta

Note.

1. The addition was made to emphasise the dependence of Election upon Christ: i.e. Christ is not merely the means but also the cause of Particular Election.  
So the whole tone of the first and second paragraphs.

17. vasa in honorem  
efficta per  
Christum ad  
aeternam salutem

sunt nobis  
ignota....  
tamen!xx

2. adducere. Unde qui  
tam praeclaro Dei  
beneficio sunt  
donati, illi Spiritus  
ejus opportuno  
tempore operante,  
secundum propositum  
ejus vocantur;  
vocationi per  
gratiam parent;  
justificantur gratis;  
adoptantur in filios  
Dei; unigeniti ejus  
Jesu Christi imagini  
efficiuntur conformes;  
in bonis operibus  
sancti ambulant; et  
demum ex Dei miseri-  
cordia pertinguunt  
ad sempiternam  
felicitatem.

3. Quemadmodum prae-  
destinationis et  
Electionis nostrae  
in Christo pia  
considerato dulcis,  
suavis, et ineffabilis  
consolationis plena  
est vere piis et his  
qui sentiunt in se  
vim Spiritus Christi,  
facta carnis et membra  
quae adhuc sunt super  
terram mortificantem,  
animumque ad celestia  
et superna rapientem  
tum quia fidem nostram  
de aeterna salute  
consequenda per Christum  
plurimum stabilit atque  
confirmat, tum quia  
amorem nostrum in Deum  
vehementer accendit: ita  
hominibus curiosis  
carnalibus et Spiritu  
Christi destitutis, ob  
oculos perpetuo versari  
Praedestinationis Dei

Note.

2. The repudiation of Anti-  
nomianism. Faith implies  
sanctity of life.

3. Condemnation of  
speculation and the  
emphasis on the Scriptu-  
ral sense of the terms  
with particular regard  
to those who maintained  
a dual will of God - one  
to redeem all men as  
revealed in Scripture,  
and the other which was  
not so revealed, whereby  
He acted in a dis-  
criminating way towards  
men.



17. sententiam perniciosissimum est praecipitum, unde illos diabolus protrudit vel in desperationem vel in aequae pernitiosam impurissimae vitae securitatem.
4. Deinde <sup>XX</sup>promissiones<sup>XX</sup> divinas sic amplecti oportet, ut nobis in sacris literis generaliter propositae sunt et Dei voluntas in nostris actionibus ea sequenda est quam in verbo Dei habemus diserte revelatam

18. De speranda aeterna salute tantum in nomine Christi.

Sunt et illi anthematizandi qui dicere audent unumquemque in lege aut secta quam profitetur esse servandum, modo juxta illam et lumen naturae accurate vixerit: cum sacrae literae tantum Jesu Christi nomen praedicent in quo salvos fieri homines oportet.

"LXI1" verbatim.

Note.

This Article was not directed against those ignorant of Christ but against some of the growing "rationalist" temper who denied the uniqueness of the salvation of God in Christ.

Heylyn's note on Article XVI1. "Quinqu Articularis" 1681, Pt. 11, Chap. 9, Sec. 2, p.535.

1. Since the Article speaks of the fall of all mankind it negatives Supralapsarianism.
2. "the everlasting purpose of God whereby He hath constantly decreed....." implies God's foreknowledge of those who would not resist prevenient Grace and have faith in Christ.
3. Sublapsarianism is denied in that election is stated to be in Christ.
4. The election taught is not General - i.e. of all mankind irresistibly.



## CHAPTER 1V.

### ARMINIUS AND THE BEGINNINGS OF ENGLISH ARMINIANISM.

#### SECTION i.   GENERAL.

The expectation of the Calvinists rose with the accession of James VI of Scotland to the English throne in 1603. It was to be anticipated, they believed, that one who had been brought up upon the theology of Knox and Calvin, and who had been monarch of a Presbyterian state would speedily establish Calvinism in England. They were to be disappointed. James I's mind is no matter for our analysis since historians agree that here is a case of a singularly baffling conflict of actions and, if of acts, then the more so of motives. But the distinction drawn earlier between the political and theological aspects of Calvinism helps us to appreciate that James's fundamental distrust of the Calvinist group in his new Kingdom, as revealed not very long after his accession, is directed against the former. The King's favourite doctrine, of which he was, in some sense, the original exponent in these islands, was that of "the Divine Right of Kings". His experiences in the Northern Kingdom probably caused him to feel a revulsion from the narrowness of the ultra-Calvinistic view of life and the austerity of worship, but the core of his reaction is to be found in the royal dictum, "a Scottish Presbytery agreeth as well with a Monarchy as God with the

Devil!! Since in the manner, and under the constraint, of the times, the King must build up for himself support where it was most to be relied upon and most readily of service, James grew increasingly attached to those who, by a strange chance, were to be the first to be called Arminian in this country. These were the leaders of the Anglican Church who, in the last reign, had stood out against the Presbyterian attempts to change the Church's forms and faith. The naturalness of this alliance - of the throne against those who would limit his powers with the Episcopacy against that same group who would have sent them packing - was not missed by James. Episcopacy and Monarchy were allies with a common enemy. "No Bishop" said James, "no King".<sup>1</sup> One of the earliest acts of his reign was to call a Conference at Hampton Court (1604) to attempt to secure a peaceful and agreed solution to the religious controversy between the higher and lower sections of the Church. For it must not be forgotten that Calvinism was the dominant creed with the mass of parish clergy, and also at Oxford until 1630, although as we have noted, the reaction had begun amongst those better educated Churchmen who were now gaining access to a wider literature than that produced by the leading Continental Reformers.

The Presbyterian party brought to the Conference the

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1. At Hampton Court on hearing the word "Presbytery" mentioned. W.H. Frere, "History of the English Church, 1558-1625", p. 296.

Lambeth Articles and pressed for their inclusion amongst the authorised doctrinal standards of the Church. This, the last attempt to alter the Anglican dogmatic statements, suffered defeat. "The Puritans had in short to accept the fact that their Calvinistic tenets could not find a place within the four corners of the formulae of the Church".<sup>1</sup> The discussions began to irritate the King who considered himself no mean theologian. At last he saw that no solution satisfactory to his ends could come from a conference compromise. "If this is all they have to say, I shall make them conform themselves or harry them out of the land or else do worse", he said. And steps were taken that same year to carry out that verdict. The King gave full power to the Bishops to enforce subscription and conformation to the "XXXIX Articles" and to the Canons and Rubrics. Diverse accounts are given of the number of clergy who were excluded from their livings. Heylyn puts it at forty-nine while a higher figure given is three hundred.<sup>2</sup> But whichever estimate be correct, it is obvious that either the action of the Bishops was not rigorous or that there were only a few whose espousal of the characteristic doctrines of Geneva was absolute. Other evidence suggests that both the above explanations were, in part, correct.

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1. B.J. Kidd, "The Thirty-nine Articles, etc.", p. 57.  
 2. Cambridge Modern History.

Other measures taken were, (1) a Royal visit to the Universities where the King enjoined all to be faithful to the "XXXIX Articles" in teaching and preaching and to avoid controversy on Predestination; and (2) James's order of August 1622 forbidding anyone of lower status than Dean to preach on the disputed points. But this last, though there was much to be said for some move to quieten a dispute which was being carried on with increasing violence of language, did not achieve its object.

Throughout the latter part of the reign<sup>1</sup>, various events occurred to stir up the conflict. One of these events was the Montagu case which revealed the direction of the King's sympathies to all the world. A somewhat rude and certainly vigorous production of the Puritan party, entitled "A Gag for the New Gospel", appeared about 1623 contending for a Predestinarian interpretation of the "XXXIX Articles". It aroused a young student of patristics, one Richard Montagu from the academic quiet of his country living to reply (1624) in "A New Gag for an Old Goose". Montagu, who eventually adorned the episcopal bench under Charles I, was charged before the courts with heresy and placed himself under James's protection in his book entitled, "Appello Caesarem". The country took sides and the distant rumbling of the storm which was to break over Charles I's unhappy head could be heard.

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1. James died in 1625.

SECTION ii. JACOB VAN HARMAN.

But for the most important event in the revivifying of the antagonism between the two sections of the nation, and therefore of the two theological schools, we must look now to Holland where events are taking place which bring into prominence the name of the "acute and distinct Arminius",<sup>1.</sup> and introduce yet a further party-name into English history.<sup>2.</sup>

It will suffice for our purpose, in view of the detailed and comprehensive material to be found in the works of Dr. A.W. Harrison<sup>3.</sup> and elsewhere, merely to sketch the events of Arminius' own lifetime and of the period immediately after his death.

Jacob van Harman was born at Oudewater in 1560. He became the protege of his parish minister and received good schooling at Utrecht. Fortunate again, he was taken to Marburg University in 1574. But during this period the Spanish invaders devastated his native town and killed his widowed mother, brother and sisters. Befriended in this situation by Peter Bertius of Rotterdam he studied at Leyden. Accepting

1. John Milton's phrase.

2. Principal Tulloch, "Rational Theology etc.", pp. 182-3, has a valuable note on the change of attitude to Calvinism in England at this period due to the coming of Arminianism.

3. Dr. Harrison's books are;—1, "The Beginnings of Arminianism" 1926, from which much of the material in this section is taken, and, "Arminianism", 1937, to which reference is made in the Preface. The three volumes of J. Nichol's "Translation of the Works of Arminius" have also provided valuable material from the many notes therein.



a contract to return to Amsterdam as pastor, at the expense of the Amsterdam merchants he proceeded to turn to the Universities of Geneva (to study under Beza), Basel, and Geneva again, finishing with a period of seven months spent in Padua and Rome before returning to Amsterdam to begin his ministry in 1587. This diversity of influences left its mark in a mind unusually catholic for the age. His preaching career opened with exposition of the Book of Malachi and the Epistle to the Romans.

It was not long before he began to form and express the opinions later to be named after him. He was called to amend an unsatisfactory reply<sup>1</sup> prepared against the published views of one Koornhert, who, with other matters, advanced heterodox views on the doctrine of Predestination. His reply never appeared for he himself began to disagree with the orthodox Calvinistic views which had been inculcated in him by Beza at Geneva.

After much Biblical and other study he felt impelled to alter his preaching to express his new convictions but he remained an exceedingly popular preacher - men and women of all ranks flocking to hear him. His opinions were publicly attacked by Plancius<sup>2</sup> and, in a public examination,<sup>he</sup> revealed his growing interest in the study of the Bible and the Early Fathers. The trouble for the moment passed, and Arminius

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1. It was sub-lapsarian.

2. The great Dutch divine and geographer.

proceeded to enquire further with his brethren. He conducted a long correspondence with Junius<sup>1</sup> on the subject, and sent the whole of it to his great friend Uitenbogaert, Court Chaplain to the Statholder Maurice, for his comment. In 1598 he received an English work on Predestination, Dr. William Perkins' "Armilla Aurea"<sup>2</sup> and proceeded to write a refutation<sup>3</sup> of the extreme views of God's Sovereign Will therein; which reply was not published however until 1611 (probably).

Professorial vacancies occurring in that Protestant foundation, Leyden University, and the strong desire on the part of Amsterdam to detain him having been overcome, Arminius became Divinity Professor there in 1603, not however before the question of his orthodoxy had again been raised and settled, or rather temporarily silenced. He was the first to receive the doctorate in Divinity in the new Leyden University, his public inaugural exercise being on "The Nature of God", his oration on "The Priesthood of Christ", and his opening lectures as Professor on (1) "The Object of Theology",

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1. The "Correspondence with Junius" appears on pp. 360-486 of the collected "Works" in the edition of 1635. Junius was a personal friend and had accompanied Arminius to Italy.
  2. An English version of this work "A Golden Chaine, or a Description of Theologie containing the Order of the Causes of Salvation and Damnation, etc. etc.", and dated 1591 has been consulted. The work is based on Beza. Perkins' views on Predestination are, shortly, as follows:- He says that "the cause of the execution of God's Predestination is His mercy in Christ in them which are saved and, in them which perish, the fall and corruption of man; yet so, as that the decree and eternall counsell of God, concerning them both, hath not any cause beside His will and pleasure".
  3. "Examen Libelli Perkensiani de Pradestinationis Ordine et Modo", Opera, pp. 499-611.

(2) "The Author and End of Theology", and (3) "The Certainty of Sacred Theology".<sup>1</sup>

Arminius, with his colleagues, presided at the students' "Disputations", this duty involving him in the presentation of a formal and "model" answer to the question posed. These "Theses" will be found, entitled "Public" and "Private Disputations", in the collected works. Two especially caused comment, that of February 1604 on "Sin in our First Parents", and that of May of the same year on "Predestination". His senior colleague, Gomarus, now made clear his distrust and dislike of Arminius' views by publicly maintaining contrary expositions. Arminius' private answer to these was not to be given to the public until 1645, however.<sup>2</sup> In 1605 Arminius was Rector of the University. Opposition to him developed rapidly, fed by the less mature utterances of his pupils and embittered by partisan bickerings of the untheological public. The Dortrecht Presbytery then requested the State Synod of South Holland to investigate the rumours of heterodoxy at Leyden. An enquiry was made, and Arminius, as Rector, with Gomarus and Trelcantius, his professional colleagues reported that though there was no notable dissention from orthodoxy among the students, steps would be taken to diminish

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1. The Oration and Lectures, Opera, pp. 9-58.

2. This document, as Nichols, (Vol. III, p. 521) notes, is not included in the 1635 "Opera".

unprofitable discussions. In 1606 Arminius closed his Rectorship with a lecture on "Religious Dissentions" and the States General agreed to summons the National Synod which both parties had advocated.

A preliminary meeting for this Synod was held at the Hague on May 1607. but the Synod itself, for political reasons, was deferred till 1618. The antagonism to Arminius intensified throughout 1608 during which year he produced, in defence of his position, the "Letter to Hyppolytus a Collibus" - the latter personage being the Ambassador at the Hague of the Elector Palatine. With Uitenbogaert Arminius petitioned for a National Synod at which to clear himself of the charges, many of them quite unfounded, against him, but he received only a summons to appear before the Netherlands Great Council in May. He was called again before the States General in October, where he produced his "Declaration",<sup>1</sup> this being his contribution to the collection of "comments" upon the Dutch Church formularies then being made. If his full and explicit statement aroused the ire of his opponents it also rallied those who espoused his views. But Arminius was spared the unhappy days of conflict which followed, for the tension of the past years had undermined the quiet scholar-pastor's health. He lived long enough only to undertake a public debate with

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1. "Declaratio Sententiae Armini; etc.", to which reference has been made before.



Gomarus, at the Hague, and died, worn out by the lovelessness of his fellow Christians on 19th October, 1609.

The later story of this conflict of religious opinions in the Netherlands is one full of bitterness. Great names appear on either side, the Remonstrants, as the Arminian party were to be called in their own land (*vide infra*), claiming those of Oldenbarnvelt, Advocate of the States General, Episcopius and Limborch, theologians of great powers, and the commanding personality of Grotius, the father of international law. But the conduct of the practical steps which had to be taken to obtain a fair hearing and, more important still, to continue the process of gaining and disseminating truth, fell immediately to Uitenbogaert. When in 1618 the postponed National Synod met at Dortrecht (anciently Dort) Uitenbogaert and Episcopius produced the formal statement of the group's peculiar theological emphasis (it is not a "theology" for we have seen that the points at issue cover only a small, if highly important, area of Christian thought) in the "Five Points" (see p.16) designated a "Remonstrance". The Synod of Dort, as all impartial students must agree, abounded in bitter feeling and was singularly lacking in judicial qualities. The Remonstrants received scant hearing and left the session virtually as outlaws. The limits set to this present enquiry forbid any further and deeper study of Remonstrant history or theology and we again cross the North Sea to follow the course of Arminian beliefs in an Anglican setting.



SECTION iii. HOLLAND AND ENGLAND.

It is difficult to say just when and how England first became aware of the religious controversy taking place in the Low countries. Commercial intercourse was strong, and news and views passed readily from one country to the other. The pious wool-merchants of both nations did, we know, exchange views of religious doings and books on their business journeys. Then again James was anxious at one period to ally himself with the Netherlands against Spain - a policy he soon reversed.<sup>1</sup> At any rate the growing number of those who reacted against extreme Calvinism did read the writings of both the Arminians and their opponents.

Grotius visited London in 1613 in an attempt to enlist the support of the King and of the English Church for the Remonstrant cause and made a considerable impression on both. Then, if not earlier, Anglicans of the type of Andrewes and Laud became aware that the conflict of theological views which existed between themselves and the Puritans had its Continental parallel and that, through Arminius and his friends, their own theological position was receiving expression in a positive and enduring form.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Possibly his later inclination away from the Contra-Remonstrant faction may have been due to his growing desire to stand well with the Catholic powers.
  2. But the wide divergence between the Ecclesiastico-political opinions of the English and Dutch is noted elsewhere.

Laud and Howson are said<sup>1</sup> to have been the first at Oxford to read the Remonstrant statements. Laud at Oxford and Andrewes at Cambridge were to be the chief protagonists of the doctrine of a Universal Atonement. But, in 1622, the rebellion against Calvinism, which began at Cambridge, had spread throughout the country and everywhere men were taking sides on the "deep points of predestination, election, reprobation, and the universality, efficacy and resistability or irresistability of God's grace".<sup>2</sup>

So that Bishop Hall was heard to say<sup>3</sup> that the country was "sickening of the Belgic disease or the five busy Articles". By 1625, only seven years after Dort, the High Church party already bore the name "Arminian".

But we must retrace our steps to look at the participation of English and Scottish representatives of the King in the Synod of 1618. It is significant, in view of what has been written upon James's attitude to the dispute, that he chose as his personal representatives men who were neither rigid Calvinists<sup>4</sup> or strong opponents of that group, but churchmen

1. A.W. Harrison, "Arminianism". p. 124.

2. Frere, op. cit. p. 382.

3. The "Five Points" of the Remonstrance were point-for-point replies to the five articles of the Calvinists. Hence the whole discussion became known as the "Quinqu Articular Controversy" and hence, also, the title of Heylyn's book, the "Quinqu Articular History", cited throughout as "Quinqu Articularis".

4. "Quinqu Articularis", Chap. 6., para. 1. Yet James called the Arminians ".....enemies of God's grace", on one occasion.

who, in days soon to come, would have been called Latitudinarian. Although invitations were sent by the Dutch authorities to many Protestant Churches<sup>1</sup> the British envoys were no more than private representatives of the King and some special steps had to be taken to secure their recognition. That they found the atmosphere uncongenial is beyond doubt. As Frere remarks, "they were too reasonable and learned to agree to the one-sided animosity and unfairness with which the Arminians were treated there".<sup>2</sup> The deputation consisted of Bishop Carleton, of Landaff, who returned home before the Synod was concluded, Dr. Joseph Hall, Dean of Worcester, Davenant, Professor of Theology at Cambridge, and Archdeacon Ward. Besides these there was present as James's secret envoy, John Hales, Chaplain to the English Ambassador to Holland, (Sir Dudley Carleton) in whose "Golden Remains"<sup>3</sup> are contained his letters to the Ambassador, those of the English delegates to the Archbishop of Canterbury,

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1. Carefully selected so as to give the impression that the Synod was of a pan-Protestant order and yet to ensure the return of the pre-determined verdict.
  2. Op. cit. p. 383.
  3. The "Golden Remains" of John Hales were collected and edited by Heylyn and are generally to be found in editions of the latter's works. The copy consulted is an edition of 1673 in the Royal Library, Cambridge University Library. The "Remains" are a primary source of great value.

the "Acta Synodi" and the "Sententia Arminii". Lastly, there are the letters of Dr. Walter Balcanqual<sup>1</sup> and of Dr. Goad who arrived later to replace Dean Hall.

The above letters all indicate how far away the British representatives felt themselves from their fellow-delegates. Hales admits frankly that he came out with strong prejudice against the Arminians but there learned to respect them. A friend writes of him, "You may please to take notice that in his younger days he was a Calvinist, and even then when he was employed at that Synod, and at the well pressing of St. John 111.16 by Episcopius - 'There I bid John Calvin good-night' as he has often told me".<sup>2</sup>

The account given by Hales with the other matter in the "Golden Remains" leaves no doubt that the delegates were acting rather against their own convictions and in obedience to their royal master when they associated themselves with the findings of the Synod.<sup>3</sup> Yet on their return they found that the King, under the influence probably of Andrewes for whom he had a profound respect, and also for the political reasons touched on elsewhere, was now prepared openly to favour the High Churchmen at home and those most in antagonism to the rigid Protestants abroad.

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1. A Scots Presbyterian sent by James as representative of the Church of Scotland.
  2. Quoted from Anthony Farindon's prefatory letter to the "Golden Remains".
  3. Cf. their sympathy with the Bremen delegates.



At this juncture it will be suitable to discuss the High Church party, from now on the upholders of Arminian views against the Puritans. In the first place we have seen that at this point in history they received by general consent the name "Arminian" as descriptive of their theology. Secondly, they were the group closest to the throne. And thirdly, they were the guardians of "Anglicanism" - that characteristic English post-Reformation conception of the Church.

The name Arminian says Dr. Harrison, was really "a nick-name given by the Puritan party to any ecclesiastic who shewed no enthusiasm for Calvinist orthodoxy and turned his face back towards the discarded rites and dogmas of Rome".<sup>1</sup>. But the latter part of this statement needs qualification. If the leading Arminians were High Churchmen they were faithful to the Church and State to which they belonged, and it is doubtful if any of them ever thought seriously of a return to Rome, either as individuals or for their Church. The breach was now too wide to be closed without a disorganisation of life which would have palpably undesirable consequences for them as for the nation at large. Despite their antipathy to the Puritan views, the impartiality they shewed, for instance on questions of preferment (at least in a sufficient number of significant individual cases) beside the tenor of their own writings, clears them of the charge of secret leanings towards

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1. "Arminianism", p. 128.



a restoration of the Roman tie.

The widespread hatred which attached to the name "Arminian" was due, in part, to the virulence of the writings of such men as Montagu, and also to the interrelation of Arminian views with privilege and royal favouritism - our second point. Despite the strength of the Puritan rank and file, Dr. C.S. Carter says, "these new Arminian divines.... not only maintained their position but, fortified by royal patronage which they obtained by advocating the claim asserted by the Stuart Kings to arbitrary and irresponsible Government, they soon became sufficiently powerful to make a largely successful attempt to expel from the Church all who refused to accept their theological opinion".<sup>1</sup> So that the name Arminian on English soil came to cover a political as well as theological meaning. It was the name given to the party which gave its adherence to the Crown in the struggle for the Prerogative against Parliamentary Privilege. These facts may not be pleasant to those who, attracted to the doctrine of Universal Atonement, would desire it to be found uniformly in the best company and upheld by its sheer inherent truth alone. But history offers us many such examples of truth prevailing through circumstances which are not beyond criticism on moral grounds and by the efforts of men whose

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1. Other historians, while affirming the connection, shew reasons for holding it less in distaste. The quotation is from Dr. C.S. Carter's, "The English Church in the XVIIth Century".

motives are, to put it at the best, mixed.

But grave injustice would be done to the English exponents of the Arminian theology if the generalisations fastened on to them by their antagonists were allowed to pass without challenge. In reply to a question as to what the Arminians held, Bishop Morley is reputed to have said, "all the best bishoprics and deaneries in England". But yet the individuals who were so preferred could be men of great moral, spiritual and intellectual calibre. Leaving our consideration of Laud until we turn to the next reign, the names of Lancelot Andrewes, Overall, Hales, Bancroft, and Hooker are those of men who lived for an ideal of what the Christian Church should be. Most or all of them would have repudiated the name "Arminian". Granted that the Dutch controversy had in the hour lent a convenient name to the conception of God's grace which they held to be true, they were not indebted to the Remonstrants for more than the name. They possessed the inheritance of the Anglican-Melanchthonian tradition which looked to the Bible and the earliest ages of the Church for its inspiration. "The Church of England had, under the Tudors, been in the main moulded by two influences - in the first place by the spirit of learning and enquiry which attached itself to the English Renaissance, and in the second, by the more specifically Protestant individualisation of religious life which had shewed itself

through the acceptance of the verbally inspired Bible as a rule of faith and practice".<sup>1.</sup> And further, speaking of the Cambridge school under Andrewes and Overall, Frere remarks that "they saw, as earlier reformers had not been so well able to see, what was involved in the appeal to Scripture, what was the authority of the Church of the day, and what was the present value of its own past experience, and especially of the precedents set by the primitive and undivided Church".<sup>2.</sup> Thus Lancelot Andrewes, Master of Pembroke, and later Archbishop of Canterbury said he sought for the materials of his faith, not in the Remonstrant or Reformation writings but from "the Two Testaments, the three Creeds, the four Councils, and the five first centuries".

The succession is now clear to our view. The revival of ancient learning, of whom the chief representative is Erasmus, and which preceded and coincided with the Reformation, influenced the minds of those who were feeling dissatisfied with the position of the Christian Church in matters of faith and order. Of these Melanchthon in Germany, and Cranmer in England may be taken as representative. They were compelled to and equipped for an examination of the sources of Christianity and had their links directly with each other as well as through their common sources of inspiration. The successors

1. S.R. Gardiner, Cambridge Modern History, Vol. 111, p. 552.  
 2. Op. cit. p. 342.

of Cranmer, - Hooker, Andrewes and Laud, and others, - steadily followed that same course of study and thought which in fullness of time produced what Canon Elliott-Binns calls "the vital and authentic ethos of the Church of England". Our contention is that to all those named and to that same ethos belongs the doctrine of the Universality of the Offer of Salvation in Christ which is the "Arminianism" of Wesley, of Laud, and Andrewes, and of Arminius himself, and now, by the end of James I's reign admitted by friend and foe to be a distinctive and distinguishing feature of the "Anglican" or High Church group.

Arminius himself would have repudiated both the Anglican ceremonial and the Anglican Erastianism, but he would have been fully at one on the doctrine of the Divine Decrees with those who now spoke in his name on English soil.



## CHAPTER V.

### ENGLISH ARMINIANISM; WESLEY'S HERITAGE.

#### SECTION 1. LAUD AND COMMONS.

Under the leadership of Laud the "Arminian" (for we may now adopt for convenience the name used by those whose doings bulk most largely in this part of our study) party became yet more securely entrenched in royal favour and privilege, establishing themselves in an alliance which was, despite the events of 1649-60, to protect the growth and ensure the popularity of their views, and enable Arminianism to<sup>1.</sup> become general and influential from the Restoration until our own time.

The case of Montagu was before the first Parliament of the reign and, while it was yet sub-judice and Montagu held in prison, Charles I exhibited his sympathies by making him a Court Chaplain - not an act calculated to endear the king to his "faithful commons". Matters of taxation, of the clash between conflicting claims of authority in general, are by most historians held to be the chief causes of the quarrel between King and Parliament. But the occasions for each renewed outburst were frequently theological. The name "Arminian" recurs in the Parliamentary annals and Puritan writings as the object of deep hatred and distrust. The distrust was mutual. At the King's request Laud produced

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1. In the religious and theological sense.



what may be termed a "P & O" list which, while it bears no reference to eastern travel, was thought by the Puritans to indicate that the journey to Rome was immanent. On it all the Puritan and Orthodox Clergy<sup>1.</sup> were designated by their appropriate initial letter. With this instrument the king proceeded to secure that in general only men to his liking secured any position of power in the Church. But there were exceptional appointments of ardent yet saintly and scholarly Calvinists which do indicate that Laud was not so partisan as not to recognise that the general good of the Church was, by his office, laid upon him as his grand object.

The dispute between Commons and the throne over Montagu (who occupies more space in historical records than his intrinsic worth deserves) gave an opportunity to Parliament to thrust at the Bishops and for a riposte. The second Parliament was faced with an Episcopal vindication of Montagu, and there followed a spate of pamphlets from the other side. The king intervened with a revival of his father's proclamation against preaching on Predestination and cognate points. He might have spared himself the trouble. The paper war and pulpit skirmish continued accompanied by vigorous attempts to suppress the Puritan opposition. The Commons in 1629 resolved: "We... do claim, profess and avow for truth the sense of the Articles of Religion.... which by the public acts of

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1. To Laud's way of thinking.

the Church of England and by the general and concurrent exposition of the writers of our Church, have been delivered to us, and we do reject the sense of the Jesuits and the Arminians". At this challenge to his authority (his wishes had been made patent) Charles summarily and forcibly attempted to adjourn the Commons. But, while his emissary yet sought admission, the House resolved, "Whosoever shall bring in innovation in religion, or by favour seek to extend Popery or Arminianism.... shall be reputed a capital enemy to this Kingdom". How the dispute ended one morning in Whitehall is well-known.

#### SECTION ii. ARMINIAN STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS.

As we stand on the eve of the Civil War and Commonwealth it will be suitable to review the inwardness of the conflicting ideologies. Inevitably, as Episcopacy and Arminianism became identified with privilege, authoritarianism and the Crown, Calvinism, Puritan and Presbyterian, became identified with democracy, religious freedom and Parliament, and was consolidated into an "opposition" group. Here is the appearance of an anomaly. For it was Arminianism which contained the germ-ideas which were to contribute so greatly to the later development of freedom of thought and even, through stages of degeneration, to the materialistic philosophy and self-satisfaction<sup>1</sup> of man of the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries,

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1. In the sense of being satisfied with himself as man and seeing no need for a Divinity who was more than a philosophical "a priori".

the period of the Age of Reason. It was Arminianism which, both on the Continent and in England, was to provide a theological impulse and nexus for the development of that group of conceptions of the freedom and worth of the individual which, for better and for worse, were to pervade society, touching religion, commerce, science, philosophy, politics and social relationships, and be a characteristic of modern society.

It would be impossible to pass over Principal Tulloch's fine generalisations on this, the wider significance of Arminianism, although a digression is involved. "Arminianism was a great deal more than a dogmatic theology - it rapidly became a method of religious enquiry. The method... became its most vital element: and has alone<sup>1</sup> given to it its enduring significance in the history of Christian thought. It was inevitable that Arminianism should make a new appeal to the intellectual side of Protestantism. It could only make good its form of doctrine, and vindicate its position within the Reformed Churches, by Biblical enquiry and argument."<sup>2</sup> We have seen how this very preoccupation with a rereading Scripture in the light of Scripture and not in

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1. This would seem a little too sweeping in view of Tulloch's own emphasis on the defeat of Calvinistic logic by Arminian apprehension of God.
  2. "Rational Theology, etc.", Vol. 1., p. 19.

the light of (a) Augustinian, (b) Mediaeval, or (c) XVIth century thought, dominated the minds of Melancthon and Arminius, of Cranmer, Parker and Andrewes, and, latterly, of Wesley, - with their respective schools. So, says Tulloch: "Arminianism became the special and formal outlet for all the suppressed uneasiness in Protestantism".<sup>1</sup> That is, uneasiness over the new constraints put upon the Christian mind and conscience by Confessions as in place of Papal and Conciliar limitations. And, on a later page, Arminianism "raised, wherever it spread, a new spirit of religious enquiry. It opened up large questions as to the interpretation of Scripture, and the position and value of dogma altogether, and, in short, diffused a latitudinarian atmosphere".<sup>2</sup> It cannot be gainsaid that later Arminians, at home and abroad, did diverge very largely, and in a manner that their master would have viewed with horror, from Orthodoxy.

And yet, despite the validity of the preceding paragraphs, at the end of the first quarter of the XVIIth century, Arminianism in England was set over against those who claimed to speak for liberty. And for the following reason. If the Puritans and Independents were the protagonists of freedom from a monarchy and an authoritarian episcopacy, what they desired to substitute for these were the binding and testing authority of

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1. Op. cit. p. 25.

2. Op. cit. p. 73.



Parliament and Synod. Le Bas, speaking of the Puritan opposition to Laud and especially of the charge of suppression of free and legitimate religion, says, "The Presbyterian<sup>1</sup>. system was, in its original principles as sternly and avowedly intolerant as the Pontifical Chair. It extended no hope of salvation beyond the pale of its own communion. It affected a dominion, paramount to all earthly magistracy. It proclaimed a war of extermination against heresy. It was ready to compass earth and sea for proselytes.... and if Popery had its Council of Trent, Calvinism had its Synod of Dort. If it abjured the idolatry of the Mass, it may fairly be said to have found a substitute, in the ordinance of preaching...."<sup>2</sup>. True Arminianism, although its earlier exponents hardly realised this implication in their protest, challenged the right of Rome, Bishops, and Synods alike to "bind and test" the conscience of the sincere seeker after truth or to restrain him in the expression of his honest convictions.<sup>3</sup>. Perhaps the Calvinist saw more clearly than the Arminian himself at this time what might follow in the way of latitudinarianism and "free-thinking" if men of lesser spirituality seized upon the materials to be found within Arminianism to create a system of

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1. Le Bas uses the term loosely.

2. Le Bas, "Life of Laud", p. 367.

3. Laud, of course, while his Arminian convictions were probably sincere, found them extremely convenient as food for his thoughts of a unified and uniform English Church.



thought useful to their own ends.

At any rate, Arminianism and Popery were together the major objects of fear, hatred and vilification on the part of the Calvinist-Parliamentary group. In Parliament Francis Rous desired that, "we may consider the increase of Arminianism, an error that makes the Grace of God lackey after the will of man. I desire we may look into the belly and bowels of this Trojan Horse, to see if there be not men in it ready to open the gates to Romish tyranny, for an Arminian is the spawn of a Papist, and if the warmth of favour come upon him, you shall see him turn into one of these frogs that rise out of the bottomless pit".

A typical specimen of the Calvinist literature of the day is John Owen's "A Display of Arminianism"<sup>1</sup> from which some extracts will prove illuminating. He accuses the Church leaders of the day of "halting betwixt Jehovah and Baal - as to speak part the language of Ashdod<sup>2</sup> and part the language of the Jews;<sup>3</sup> hence, hence hath been the rise of all our miseries, of all our dissensions, whilst factious men, laboured every day to commend themselves to them, who sate aloft in the temple of God<sup>4</sup> by introducing new Popish Arminian errors, whose Patronage they have wickedly undertaken".

1. The quotations here are taken from the "Dedication".
2. He charges Arminianism with holding pagan "free-will", and,
3. with teaching legal righteousness.
4. A reference to Laud and the Episcopate.

If "any object that all 'Arminians' do not openly profess all these errours I have recounted", he warns his readers that Arminianism is "like the Serpent, wherever she gets in her head she will wriggle in her whole body sting and all"! We must, he says, "proclaime *ἱερον πόλεμον*, an holy warre to such enemies.." Owen declares that Arminians have two main ends: (1) "to exempt themselves from God's Jurisdiction;.... to have an absolute independent power, in all their actions;" and, (2) "to cleave humane nature, from the heavie imputation of being sinfull, corrupt, wise to doe evill, but unable to doe good." The pen of Owen is not directed only against the Arminians but also against their doctrine. As an example: "Free will, amor & delitiae humani generis, corrupted nature's deformed darling, the Pallas or beloved selfe-conception of darkened mindes, findes open hearts and armes for its adulterous embraces;"<sup>1</sup> is as good a specimen as most one might quote from the crowded pages of his works.

William Prynne's "Anti-Arminianism" is even more violent. These times and tempers were not congenial to fine discriminations; a man was a Puritan or a Papist; saved or damned; for King or Parliament, and so on. Men of mildness and conciliation, men who spoke for toleration, men, even, who wished to stand aside from narrow controversies and give

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1. This sentence is taken from the foreword, "To the Reader", to "A Treatise on Redemption".

their thought and energy to what they believed to be more important spiritual objects, all these were suspect if not condemned by one party or the other. For the Arminians, though noticeably milder and by the nature of their faith more tolerant, were not free from the worst features which stain the memory of their opponents.

Why did the Puritans so detest the "Arminian mungrell rabble which swarm like Locusts in our Church of late"?<sup>1</sup> Heylyn<sup>2</sup> sums up the objections to Remonstrant doctrine thus:

1. It destroys God's free grace and is therefore Pelagian.
2. It is a badge of Popery.
3. It inclines men to pride: i.e. through its doctrine of man's participation in the work of his salvation.
4. It creates turbulent factions.

The Arminians both ancient and modern, Dutch and English, would have flatly denied all four and adduced a mass of evidence. Objections (1) and (3) are more strictly theological, but the second and fourth are capable of examination on a historical basis. The cry of "Popery" was raised against Arminius, Laud and Wesley; and, in fact, from the XVIth to the XIXth centuries Arminianism has stood with a large part of those who opposed it for at least a half-way stage to Rome. As to the

1. Prynne's, "Anti-Arminian", Epistle Dedicatory.  
 2. "Quinqu-Articularis", Chap. VI., paras. 1-6, p. 538.

charge of creating disorder, in so far as the introduction of an unpopular truth in face of a clamant and powerful opposition is ever the cause of tumult, the charge stands. Yet, of itself, it is not a contentious faith. Arminius himself was by temperament a man strongly averse from being on bad terms with others and was, by the quality of his own spiritual life, impelled to seek the collaboration of others in his search for truth rather than to engage in attempts to vindicate himself for the sake of doing so. He was modest and self-critical, almost to a fault so his friends thought, and only engaged in the debates which were the unhappiness of his life because of constraint of conscience and of external circumstances. So too, with the obvious exception of Archbishop Laud, the English Arminians evince a notable desire to "think and let think", to seek a higher good beyond the mere settlement of wordy and speculative arguments, in which search men of varying opinion might happily unite.

On the purely theological opposition to Arminianism we may take Owen and Prynne as comprehensive guides. Anything they omit can hardly have been current objection. Owen's two chief criticisms have already been noted. His chapters assert that Arminianism (Ch.11) denies the Eternal Decrees; (111) denies God's prescience; (1V) vitiates God's providence; (V) teaches that "Almighty" God can be frustrated; (VI) accepts the terms Election and Predestination but puts a false, illogical and unscriptural content into it; (VI1) denies



Original Sin; and (Vlll) Adam's Original Righteousness.

Further, it asserts (lX) that Christ dies for all and not for those only whom God, of His free and sovereign will has chosen, and deny<sup>ies</sup> that Christ's death is the meritorious cause of our salvation. Hence, the Arminians, (X), exclude the operation of the Holy Spirit and of grace; they claim that (Xl) man can be saved "without knowledge of or faith in Christ" and (Xll) make human free-will supreme over God's will. It is on this last head that Owen enjoys most to expatiate - on what he quaintly terms their "old Idoll Free-will". But he himself must admit "that we doe not absolutely oppose Free-will, as if it were a nomen inane..." Man has "as much power, libertie and freedome, as a meere created will is capable of",<sup>1</sup> and he is in some straits to say just how far man's liberty of choice extends. It is on this page (125) that we find him giving us words for what, in the last analysis, is probably the final estimate of all Predestinarian controversy. He says, "About words we will not contend.... The imposition of names, depends upon the direction of their inventors". If Owens and all the controversialists of all ages had remembered the latter and been faithful to the former phrase, this thesis, to speak of a very minor result, could not have been written.

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1. "Display of Arminianism", p. 125.



Owens, and we are only taking him as an example among many, finds it easier, as might be anticipated, to destroy Arminian "Idolls" than to erect his own temple. Faced with the New Testament passages which speak of the universality of the offered Atonement, he replies that what is meant is<sup>1</sup> that the merit of Christ's death was sufficient to be a ransom for the sins of all men; that "all men" (e.g. in 1 Tim., 11.4) means (1) "some of all sorts" or, (2) "not only Jews, but also Gentiles". He would of course have been unable to admit this as a transgression of his own primary rule of fidelity to the literal meaning of Scripture, but he betrays a manifest uneasiness, here and elsewhere, in dealing with the positive difficulties of his own doctrine - the points where Arminianism was able most easily to enlist the sympathetic ear of those not utterly in bondage to the "ipsissima verba" of Calvin.

The method of Prynne<sup>2</sup> is to set out, first of all, "the Records the Acts and Monuments of our Church" and second, "the names and testimonies of our writers", i.e. those Church of England and other divines upon which he relies for support. Along with the Articles, Homilies and Prayer Book, which are extracted, arranged and annotated with an eye to the purpose, he includes as of like authority, the Lambeth and Irish

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1. Op. cit., pp. 92 & 3.  
 2. "Anti-Arminian", 1630.

Articles, the Catechism of Edward VI, "Certaine Questions and Answers touching the Doctrine of Predestination, Printed by Robert Barker, anno 1607, which were then bound up and sold with our English Bibles", the Acts of the Synod of Dort, Barrett's Recantation and extracts from the University Register on that affair. "Having thus," he says, "at large recited the severall Grand-charters and the more Eminent Records and Evidences which our Church afford", he proceeds to apply his authorities to Arminian doctrine, using a catalogue of writers,<sup>1</sup> to support his arguments. These need not be rehearsed as in the main they are those to be found in Owen. But one quotation must be included as a sample of the manner in which the Arminian views were travestied at that period. Arguing that the doctrine of the Universal Offer of Salvation involves a denial of the Absolute decrees, it follows, he claims<sup>2</sup>, "If no Predestination, then no Christ; no election, no incitation, no adoption into Christ, no vocation, no justification, no faith, no salvation by Christ.....", or, as we might summarise his sequence for him, - no Christianity at all if Arminius be believed.

But men of more moderate temper were to take the trouble to consider the positive teaching of the Remonstrants. A judgment passed by a later thinker is worthy of note as an

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1. Almost all, be it noted, of the Reformation era.  
 2. Op. cit., p. 114.

estimate of the strength and weakness of English Arminianism prior to Wesley's day. Charles Simeon is reported as saying, "Both of them" (i.e. Calvinists and Arminians) "are right in all they affirm and wrong in all they deny..... In Scripture there are Calvinistic principles to act on man's hopes, and Arminian principles to act on his fears; both are needful and contribute to produce the right effect".<sup>1</sup>.

It is significant that both Prynne and Owen have difficulty in quoting from Arminius himself anything which is capable of immediate service to their purpose. But they do not have the same difficulty with some of the later school. And the charge of Pelagianism which, with that of Popery, punctuates the XVIIth and XVIIIth century anti-Arminian writings, finds its fullest justification in those who, beginning with Arminius' protest against Calvin's and Augustine's hardening of Scriptural terms and not being possessed of his fundamentally evangelical outlook, his deep personal religion nor his reverence for Scripture, diverged from orthodoxy into Unitarianism or returned to Mediaevalism within the Church of Rome. But such pathways, though the gates to them be opened by the instinctive and Scriptural demand for the freer air of God's merciful judgment, are not the only ones which lead from the prison of logic in which

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1. Quoted by C.S. Carter, "The English Church in the XVIIIth Century", p. 77.

Augustine had all unwillingly confined himself and his followers.

Andrews and, later, Wesley are but two names of men who made their escape not to licence but to liberty, not to the impoverishment but to the fulfilment of their faith in the grace of God in Christ Jesus and in His goodwill to sinful man.

### SECTION iii. PLATONISTS AND LATITUDINARIANS.

The significant event of the Commonwealth period was the development of the cleavage between Army and Parliament which was to prove fatal to the regime. Parliament was Presbyterian, in close touch with Scotland, and anxious to institute the hierarchy of Church courts, with their power over the individual and the Civil Government, which was operative in the Northern Kingdom. The Army was Independent and had as little love for an authoritarian Presbytery as for a proud prelate. Hear Milton:

#### "On the New Forces of Conscience under the Long Parliament".

"Because you have thrown off your Prelate Lord  
And with stiff vows renounced his Liturgy,  
To seize the widowed whore Plurality  
From them whose sin ye envied, not abhorred,  
Dare ye for this adjour the civil sword  
To force our consciences that Christ set free,  
And ride us with a classic Hierarchy,  
Taught ye by mere A.S.<sup>1</sup> and Rutherford?<sup>2</sup>  
Men whose life, learning, faith, and pure intent,  
Would have been held in high esteem by Paul,  
Must now be named and pointed heretics  
By shallow Edwards<sup>3</sup> and Scotch What-d'ye call!<sup>4</sup>  
But we do hope to find out all your tricks,  
Your plots and packing, worse than those of Trent,  
That so the Parliament  
May with their wholesome and preventive shears

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1. Adam Stewart, a Presbyterian pamphleteer.
  2. Samuel Rutherford.
  3. Thomas Edwards wrote against Independency.
  4. Robert Baillie of Glasgow.



"Crop ye as close as marginal P - - -'s ears<sup>1</sup>.  
 And succour our just fears,  
 When they shall read this clearly in your charge:  
 New Presbyter is but old Priest writ large."

From the triumph of the Army under Cromwell there was never any prospect of the Church of England becoming Presbyterian in form of government. For, with the Independent emphasis on the freedom of individuals to seek kindred spirits with whom to form a "congregation", any man was welcomed into the Army, whatever peculiarities of religious opinion he might affect, so long as he had the "root of the matter in him". So that the Cromwellian party afforded a much larger scope for variation of beliefs and became a bulwark against a narrow intolerance. Men of sense and piety increasingly found themselves seeking a broader conception of the Christian faith than that so tenaciously compressed between the fixed dogmas of the Ultra-Calvinist.

Jewish legalism which, though the Calvinists would have denied it, formed such a large element in Puritan and Presbyterian conceptions of God's dealings with man, was now being seen, as St. Paul and St. John had earlier perceived, to be only a part of the full Christian inheritance. And French logic superadded, while its contribution to the clarifying of thought and the placing of much needed emphases on the great fundamentals must never be underestimated, also

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1. This line as in a Cambridge MS. We have referred to Prynne's copious references and marginal notes.



had its limitations, as thinkers and preachers came to realise. As Tulloch says,<sup>1</sup> the very logicality of Calvinism was its downfall, on the revolt of minds more religious than logical. "The same Grace which on one side issued in predestinarian Determinism... on the other side takes the form of Divine Love which instinctively desires the good of all, and 'wills all to be saved'".

Yet the events and tempers of the Restoration (Charles II arrived in England in 1660) would seem to belie what has just been said about the rise of a deeper sense of religion. Mental, moral, and spiritual relaxation spread through the land. But this, though generally so, was not universally the case. Many men kept their heads and consciences. Genuine piety is not difficult to find in the period if one knows where to look. In country rectories, in the Universities, in the congregations of those who were to become Nonconformists, and even in the studies of the new bishops a real devotion to God and a desire to serve mankind was present - unobtrusively, but nevertheless potent for the good of Church and state in calmer days to come. Briefly, the relevant events must be noted and then, more to the purpose some attention must be given to men and movements.

It is possible that Charles II, apart from his Catholic

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1. Op. cit., Vol. I., p. 9.

sympathies, and his desire to use the dissident Protestants, had a genuine inclination toward religious toleration. But a violent reaction in favour of the institution of the national Church accompanied the other manifestations of men's desire to be free from divisions and minor disputations. Hyde, the King's chief councillor, was also very anxious to see the Anglican Church restored to its Laudian state and position. The Convention Parliament, therefore, rejected the King's proposal for a Bill of Comprehension. Yet a further effort to unite the chief religious schools, the Savoy Conference of 8th May 1661, at which representatives of the Presbyterians, led by Richard Baxter, and the bishops met, proved abortive. Laudians and Calvinists alike failed to secure concessions. "The restored Church took its stand with the Articles unaltered and the liturgy very little changed from the form of 1559, or even from that of 1552".<sup>1</sup>

The next act of ecclesiastical government was the passing of the Act of Uniformity (May 1662), which compelled all ministers, schoolmasters, heads of colleges, professors, and some others, to give unfeigned assent to all that the Prayer Book contained. This Act became operative on St. Bartholomew's Day of that same year when some one thousand two hundred persons<sup>2</sup> gave up their positions rather than conform to the

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1. Cambridge Modern History, Vol. 5, Chap. XI. H.M.G. Gwatkin's words.

2. With 800 who had already been displaced by previous occupants of positions who returned on the Restoration. This makes the usually quoted figure of 2,000, but evidence to hand does not make clear whether they were all Clergymen.

condition. Among these Non-Jurors were two of John Wesley's ancestors, his paternal great-grandfather and grandfather, clergymen in Dorset. Those who survived the rigours of later repressive measures would live to be the first Protestant Dissenters (strictly so).

Here then we are at the historical and legal parting of the ways between the Church Established and the Church Dissenting. For the best part of a century the Puritan party had striven to alter the government, the doctrine, and the ceremonies of the Church while remaining within it. Henceforth it was outside the Church that Puritanism must seek to realise its ideal. In effect the Act of Uniformity made the Church of England a sect, albeit the most powerful temporally and the strongest numerically, but still a sect - one among several. For a large part of the religious life of the nation was excluded from the confines of the Established Church.

But its power, as part of the royal political machine was so great that no excuse of "danger" from the opposition can be offered for the severity of the Conventicle (1664) and Five Mile Acts (1665) known (after Hyde) as the Clarendon Code. Edward Hyde, Lord Clarendon, has the restoration of the old Church as his monument.

But the King still felt the need for securing friends where he could, Dissenters or Catholics, against the growing claims of Parliament. His Declaration of Indulgence

(Jan.15.1672) to this end was, however, quite unconstitutional and appeared to the High Church Party as a staggering blow to the security of the Establishment, and so had to be withdrawn in 1673 in face of Parliamentary pressure and public outcry. The same year saw the passing of the Test Act which excluded Roman Catholics from all Crown service.

Doubtless there were many around the King who desired the restoration, or at least the toleration, of Romanism. There were many genuine Protestants however who viewed all this repression of the free exercise of religion with dismay. At any rate the position of the High Church party, to a great extent though not exclusively the repository of Arminian views, remained secure throughout the reign and the short period of James II's occupation of the throne (1685-1688) saw no change. To this close association of English Arminianism with what the populace rightly guessed to be the Roman sympathies of Charles, with the open Romanism of James, belongs the renewed and widely disseminated dislike of Arminians as being but one step removed from Rome. In fact, the Arminian Churchmen in general favoured Rome as little as did the Dissenters. But "No Popery" was a cry easily raised and easily spread under a King who was an avowed Roman. And the disasters of James II's policy have been attributed to the fact that, mistaking the dissenters in religious opinion for the main factor in the situation, he did not realise that Anglicanism would unite internally and secure the support of



all Protestant Dissent against the common enemy, Rome.

Dissenters realised the incongruity of their association with Roman Catholics in the provisions of James' Declaration of Indulgence (1687) and opposed it as ardently as the Churchmen.<sup>1</sup> And Parliament again saw in this arbitrary act of the King the danger of restoring religious liberty at the price of losing civil freedom from royal constraint.

Finally, having alienated the rest of the nation James cast away his last support by rousing to antagonism the Establishment, grouped as we know so closely around the throne and wedded to the doctrine of "passive obedience", by two acts. These were his re-issue of the Declaration of Indulgence and his order that it should be read in all Churches, and his subsequent indictment of the Primate and six other bishops for their conscientious objection to this requirement.

Amid the national rejoicings over the acquittal of the Seven Bishops, James quits the stage, and his role is undertaken by Lutheran William of Orange and Mary his wife. One event of religious significance only calls for note in the thirteen years of this reign - the Toleration Act of 1689. Its provision for the compulsory licensing of dissenting congregations was to provide Wesley with a major problem in the organising of his Societies and made Methodists liable to the provisions of the Conventicle Act until 1787.

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1. With a few exceptions, e.g. William Penn.



The position of the Arminian party was greatly strengthened by the accession of Queen Anne. She was devoted to the Church of England as its spirit found expression within the Episcopacy. Under this favour the Arminians, as the Latitudinarian Churchmen were by now commonly called, consolidated their position and maintained it until the time of the High Church Tractarian Movement, despite the development of a strong Low-Church, Calvinistic party, the heirs of the true Puritans.

Again in this reign the unfortunate association of Arminian doctrine with political divisions emphasises itself. The Whigs drew their support from the Dissenting, Presbyterian and Independent middle classes, while the Arminian Churchmen were to be found with the privileged classes under the Tory banner. A verse of contemporary doggerel, arising out of the Sacheverell incident, is worth quoting in this connection:

"Invidious Whigs, since you have made your boast,  
That you a Church of England Priest will roast,  
Blame not the mob for having a desire  
With Presbyterian tubs to light the fire!"

Incidentally the verse indicates correctly that the mass of the people, for reasons of rather complex nature, gave their sympathies to Tory rather than Whig. Wesley's career provides many instances of the employment of the "mob" by the classes of privilege against himself and his preachers and followers. In lean and hungry days a little gold or beer did much to gain a following.

There were notable exceptions of Arminians, and probably of a more authentic type than those of the prevailing school, amongst the Whig Churchmen and the Dissenters. Most of the Bishops were Whigs and Arminians. The Church too, had its Calvinists. Religious generalisations are most of all susceptible to exceptions. And while the Latitudinarians, by their acceptance of the designation "Arminian" as by their sermons and writings, avowed their opposition to Predestination, the High Churchmen also must be counted among the exponents of a General Atonement - in virtue of their position as at the opposite extreme to the Dissenters, with whom alone,<sup>1.</sup> for the moment, the doctrine of Predestination found place. So that, as a foreign observer noted of the country at the time, "Arminianism (if the Propositions of Arminius ought to be given the odious name of a sect) is spread everywhere".<sup>2.</sup>

Historians have agreed that the characteristic feature of the Restoration period was the new confidence which possessed men in the powers of reason. The term "Age of Reason" is commonly used, though generally for a rather later epoch. But, as Professor Baillie<sup>3.</sup> has emphasised, the beginning of this renewed confidence in the powers of man's mind are to be sought much earlier than the end of the seventeenth century, Lord Herbert of Cherbury generally being considered the father of Deism. In our period men's minds were feeling the pressure

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1. As a group.

2. Monsieur Misson, "Memoirs &c.". Quoted from an English translation of 1719 in "Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne", J. Ashton.

3. In lectures delivered at New College, Edinburgh.

of the growing scientific enquiring spirit and taking advantage of freedom of thought and expression.

To an Emmanuel man, temptation to linger here is very great. For that most interesting group, the Cambridge Platonists, calls for some notice. Pained by the bitterness and spiritual aridity of the religious controversies of their age, they sought a deeper, sweeter faith through the exercise of reason as against polemic and vituperation. Their detractors denounced them as Gnostics, but their insight and knowledge of past and unsuccessful religious experiments saved them from a mere faith in human ability to read the riddles of the Universe.

After quoting Benjamin Whichcote's favourite text "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, lighted by God, and lighting us to God", and extracts from his writings, Dean Inge<sup>1</sup> says "The reason thus exalted is a reason above rationalism. It certainly includes intellectual effort.... But the appeal is to the inner experience of the whole man acting in harmony, not to mere logic-chopping, which may leave conduct and even conviction unaffected".

The majority of them were members of Emmanuel College, a Puritan foundation of 1591 intended to be a bulwark of Calvinist theology against Romanism and Lutheranism.. But

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1. "The Platonic Tradition in English Religious Thought", pp. 48 & 49.

Calvinism has always suffered attack where it was strongest,<sup>1</sup> and the Platonists, though they would have repudiated the party-name of Arminians, were, in general, believers in a General Atonement, even preaching and writing,<sup>2</sup> albeit in guarded and moderate terms, against the Predestinarian view. The link between them and the Remonstrants is stronger even than this community of thought, for Episcopius' writings were very familiar to them. However they were not brought to their characteristic mode of thought by Dutch influence. They were the representatives of what Dean Inge has called the "Platonic Tradition" or the "religion of the spirit" whose continued presence in the life of the English Church we have discovered as we have sought and found in successive ages those who held faith in God's good-will to all mankind and His offer of redemption in Christ to the whole corrupted and dying human race; a tradition of which the doctrines in which our special interest lies have been consistently a part.

Contemporary evidence tells us that the Cambridge Platonists were styled Latitude-men by those to whom their wide friendships and sympathies and their uniformly charitable temper were indications of insincerity. But the Latitudinarians of later date, of the latter half of the

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1. Tulloch's verdict.

2. Cf. Ralph Cudworth's unfinished work "The true Intellectual System of the Universe". Wesley published extracts from the writings of several of them in his "Christian Library."



XVllth and of the XVlllth centuries, were not, with honourable exceptions, men of such sterling spiritual worth.

Latitudinarianism was a reaction against dogmatism, giving the moral rather than the theological aspect of religion pride of place. This section of the Church replaced the dying High Church group (greatly weakened by the 1688 exclusions) as the politically powerful faction, filling the Episcopal bench and having (as especially with Burnet, for instance, under William of Orange) the ear of the King. Our only interest in the Latitudinarians is that they were much influenced by Remonstrant writings of the later period when the tendency to venturesome speculation, elsewhere noted, and the waning of deep spirituality, had manifested itself in the heterodoxy of Le Clerc and others at home and abroad. Yet the Latitudinarians, despite their spiritual feebleness in general, did make a substantial contribution to the enrichment of the Church. There were many scholars among them - it would indeed have been better for England if many of the bishops of the age had spent less time in their studies and more in the diocese. "As the disciples of the Cambridge Platonists, they failed perhaps in reaching the same high level of spirituality or the same depths of intellectual penetration - they were statesmen rather than Christian Philosophers. But, on the other hand, their minds were more completely emancipated from theological prepossessions and their chief characteristic



was sobriety of judgment".<sup>1.</sup>

Some outstanding names within this movement are those of Chillingworth, John Hales (whom we have already met as James' representative at Dort and a typical Latitudinarian) and Jeremy Taylor, of the earlier days; Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury, a Scots Presbyterian turned Latitudinarian and Erastian who is perhaps the most distinguished of them all; Tillotson, finally Primate; Fowler, Bishop of Gloucester; Patrick, of Chichester and Ely; Sheldon; Timson, successor to Tillotson in the Primacy; Stillingfleet, Bishop of Worcester; Sharp, Archbishop of York; William Sherlock and Daniel Whitby, the latter "the outstanding English exponent of Arminianism in the period".<sup>2.</sup>

Nor must the witness of the declining High Church party, both Non-Juring and Conforming, be forgotten. Herbert Thorndyke disliked as much as any of his contemporaries to be linked in name with men the orthodoxy of whose views was not hard to challenge, but the probability is that if his acquaintance with Arminius' own works had been greater he would have been content to admit a kinship of thought. The massive writings<sup>3.</sup> of George Bull betray a debt to Grotius

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1. Cambridge Modern History, Vol. V., Chap. XXIX, p. 753, M. Kaufman.
  2. Dr. Harrison's judgment.
  3. Harmonica Apostolica, 1669; Defensio Fidei Nicenae, 1680, Judicium Ecclesiae Apostolicae, 1694, and, The Primitive and Apostolic Tradition of the Doctrine received by the Catholic Church, 1703.

and Episcopus, and much of his life was employed campaigning against Predestination. It is of course to be expected that the Non-Jurors and High Churchmen would not be found close to the Puritans in doctrine.

"Since the days of Laud", says a XVIIIth century writer, "by far the majority of the English clergy have taken this" ~~'the Arminian'~~ "side of the question".<sup>1</sup> Outside the Church there is to be found an ever growing body of Christians who accepted the Arminian position. Milton's early name will, of course, come to mind, although his views and those of Richard Baxter are not fully Arminian. Yet another outstanding Arminian Nonconformist was John Goodwin, whose writings in support of General Atonement and Free-will are voluminous. The Quakers and General Baptists, with other individuals within the separate sects, may be added to the above.

Into the religious atmosphere here outlined John Wesley was born on the 17th June, 1703. At the time when Wesley began his education at Oxford there was a large and influential, though by no means the only, body of opinion holding that God's purposes for mankind's salvation could not be adequately or truly described in terms of the Calvinian "Decrees". Partly the theology was native, partly derived from the Remonstrants. That Wesley was early aware of the Arminian view-point need therefore occasion no surprise.

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1. John Evans, "Sketch of the Denominations, &c.", 1798, p. 38.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS FROM THE HISTORICAL SURVEY.

Let us add certain conclusions drawn from the survey contained in the last three chapters.

(1) The influence of the Continental Reformation upon the English movement was always indirect. The great men in the history of the Church in this period were conversant with the views of the European Reformers and shewed willingness to learn from Germany. Probably Melanchthon had more influence than any other foreign theologian in moulding the doctrine of the English Church.

(2) That section of the nation which was responsible for forming the character of the Church of England was conservative in outlook. While consistently and firmly in favour of repudiating Roman supremacy and desiring reformation of abuses, it also desired to preserve all that was valuable in its catholic inheritance.

(3) At no time, except during the Commonwealth, had Calvinism any great influence in the English Church. On the contrary, the two most important Calvinistic tenets, Presbyterian Church government and the doctrine of Absolute Predestination have been almost continuously repudiated.

(4) In the period of influence of Archbishop Laud the teaching of Arminius reached England. On many points it found sympathetic reception among the Church of England divines.

(5) From then onwards Arminianism was almost, but not

entirely, confined to the Church of England. The Arminian party became the dominant party in the Church. Thomas Stackhouse, writing in 1734, after noting the temporary submerging of Arminian views under the Commonwealth, continues, "But when the government came to be re-established the exploded doctrines revived, were kindled, used and cultivated for having suffered so hardly before. At present they are become the general profession of almost all the clergy of the Church of England".<sup>1</sup>.

The Arminian party became characterised by its loyalty to the Crown, advocacy of episcopacy and conservative, catholic tendency in theology and matters ecclesiastical.

(6) So that Wesley was a member and minister of a Church with a long and strong Arminian tradition. Whatever other connection his theology may have had with Arminius and the Remonstrants his Arminian views should occasion no surprise since they were orthodox. "As an adherent of the Laudian theology Wesley was an Arminian. His conversion meant no change in this respect".<sup>2</sup>.

As we have seen<sup>3</sup> Wesley, at an early date, made a careful examination of Arminianism. He seems to have given serious consideration to Calvin's Absolute Predestination. But then, Wesley, here as everywhere, was a pioneer, and though the truth lay at his feet he would find his own way to it.

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1. Stackhouse, "Body of Divinity", quoted by J. Nichols, Trans. Armin. Works, Vol. 1, p. XXXIII.
  2. A.S. Peake, Article in "The Outline of Christianity", Vol. III, p. 243.
  3. In Chapter 11.



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## CHAPTER VI.

### WESLEY'S FIRST-HAND KNOWLEDGE OF THE WRITINGS OF ARMINIUS.

The thing itself, the doctrine of a general offer of redemption, deep-rooted in the tradition and stated in the confessions of the Church Wesley loved and served; the re-emphasis, in face of challenge, given by the man who lent his name to the doctrine, and both emphasis and name transmitted to willing recipients in Anglicanism; these leave us with another question, viz: What did Wesley know at first-hand of Arminius and Arminius' own teaching and writings?

Knowing, as we do, Wesley's passion for "method" and his scrupulous regard for exact truth,<sup>1</sup> it is to be expected that he would not be content with second-hand knowledge of the views of the founder of the Arminian School to which he, Wesley, claimed to belong. But it is an interesting and quite unexpected fact that nowhere in his works,--letters, sermons, Journal, diaries or publications,--has there been found by the present writer, any direct evidence that Wesley ever read a word of Arminius' own writings.<sup>2</sup> But there are references

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1. It is very difficult to add evidence for Wesley's meticulousness in this respect as it is the almost pedantic precision of style which most clearly manifests his deep regard for accuracy of statement.
  2. Apart from general reading several hundreds of references have been examined.

which confirm our "a priori" supposition that Wesley was not without a first-hand knowledge of the Remonstrant literature and support the belief that he must have read some of Arminius' own writings for himself. They would, of course, be available to him in Latin and Dutch (of which language he had a useful knowledge) and, moreover, some at least may have been accessible in English.

The first reference that can be traced is to Wesley's attention being directed to Remonstrant works. It is in a letter written by his father on 26th January, 1725,<sup>1</sup> where Samuel Wesley recommends his son to read Grotius' commentaries on the Scriptures.

The second reference is to be found in the Journal for 6th July, 1741, and reads: "Looking for a book in the College" ("Lincoln") "Library, I took down by mistake the works of Episcopius, which opening on an account of the Synod of Dort, I believed it might be useful to read it through. But what a scene is here disclosed! I wonder not at the heavy curse of God, which so soon after fell on our Church and nation. What a pity it is, that the Holy Synod" (italics Wesley's own) "of Trent, and that of Dort, did not sit at the same time; nearly allied as they were, not only as to the purity of doctrine, which each of them established, but also as to the spirit

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1. Whitehead, "Life of John Wesley", Vol. 1., p. 385.

wherewith they acted; if the latter did not exceed!"<sup>1</sup>.

A further careful search through a list of books read<sup>2</sup> by Wesley and mentioned in the Journal reveals no single title connected directly with any of the Dutch Remonstrants. Of course this list is partial and casual, and much of Wesley's reading is without notice anywhere in his works. But, with his supreme concern, especially in later life, for the propagation of Arminian views, the omission of any explicit statement regarding the Dutchman's (or his followers') writings is surprising.

We have mentioned Wesley's supreme concern for the propagation of Arminian views. In 1770, in answer to the bitter attacks<sup>3</sup> launched against him, and heaping upon him, as an Arminian, the common accusations used by opponents against the name, Wesley published his pamphlet: "What is an Arminian?"<sup>4</sup> from which we have quoted elsewhere. Its purpose, he says, is "To clear the meaning of this ambiguous term....."<sup>5</sup>. In para.5

1. The next entry in the Journal (9th July) is of some interest. The (possibly accidental) juxtaposition serves to emphasise Wesley's criticism of the Calvinist "spirit" which appears in the above:

"Being in the Bodleian Library, I light on Mr. Calvin's account of the case of Michael Servetus... Mr. Calvin..., paints him such a monster as never was, -... But still he utterly denies his being the cause of Servetus's death. 'No' says he, 'I only advised our Magistrates, as having a right to restrain heretics by the sword, to seize upon and try that arch-heretic. But after he was condemned I said not one word about his execution!'" (Italics all Wesley's).

2. Published in Vol. 1V, Wesley Historical Society, "Proceedings"

3. By Toplady, Hill and others.

4. "The Question 'What is an Arminian?' Answered". By a Lover of Free Grace. Works X, pp.358-61.

5. Op. cit. X. p. 359.

he devotes some one hundred and fifty words to a very condensed account of Arminius' life. All that he there says of Arminius' opinions is by inference and is contained in two sentences: "He was educated at Geneva; but in the year 1591 began to doubt of the principles which he had till then received. And being more and more convinced that they were wrong, when he was vested with the Professorship, he publicly taught what he believed to be the truth..." Then follows the paragraph quoted on page 11. The pamphlet continues with an appeal for a proper understanding and right use of the terms Calvinist and Arminian, and containing this interesting phrase, "And how can any man know what Arminius held, who has never read one page of his writings?" There is only one possible inference from this, namely, that Wesley himself had read some of Arminius' writings. But let us again note the late date (1770) of this and the next reference.

There appeared in 1778 the first part of the "Arminian Magazine". In a preface<sup>1</sup>. dated Nov. 1st, Wesley says that the aim of the Magazine is to maintain that "God willeth all men to be saved, by arguments drawn partly from Scripture, partly from reason; proposed in as indifferent a manner as the nature of the thing will permit". He proposes to publish, he intimates, "some of the most remarkable tracts on the universal

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1. The "Arminian Magazine", Vol. 1.



love of God, and His willingness to save all men from all sin, which have been wrote in this and the last century". Further, each number is to consist of four parts, of which, "First a defense of that grand Christian doctrine 'God willeth all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth'".

The first number contains as its first item, "A Sketch of the Life of Arminius" taken from Peter Bertius' Funeral Oration on the interment of Arminius (Leyden, 22nd October, 1609). Almost certainly Wesley read this oration in one of the collections of the works of Arminius. It appears in the editions of 1629 and 1635 (Frankfurt), either of which may have been in the library of Lincoln College or otherwise accessible to Wesley. Reverting to the Introduction we read:- "We know of nothing more proper to introduce a work of this kind, than a sketch of the life and death of Arminius, with whom those who mention his name with the utmost indignity, are commonly quite unacquainted; of whom they know no more than of Hermes Tresmegistus". Here we discover a further slight and indirect shred of evidence to indicate possible contact of Wesley with Arminius' writings.

Although the results might have been more appropriately treated in another place the negative evidence afforded justifies a summary here of further examination of the contents of the Arminian Magazine up to the time of Wesley's death. In the first number, beside the above, there is an account of the



Synod of Dort, taken, according to Green's "Wesley Bibliography," from the third volume of Casper Brandt's "History of the Reformation"<sup>1</sup>. Of thirteen other works reprinted in the Magazine between 1778 and 1791, in full or condensed and bearing directly upon the subjects of the Predestinarian controversy, seven are by English writers of the XVIIth century, one is by a contemporary Englishman, and one from the XVIth century, while the remaining four have not been certainly traced to their authors, but are almost certainly not from Continental Arminian sources.<sup>2</sup> The conclusion is that Wesley gives every

1. An English translation of this work appeared in London in 1772, six years before the first number of the Arminian Magazine.

2. The complete list is as follows :-

A. English Writings of the XVIIth Century.

- Vol. 1. "The Examination of Tilenius before the Triers", from Bp. Womack's "The Calvinist Cabinet Unlocked", 1621.  
 " "A Discourse concerning the necessity and contingency of events etc.", Dr. Thomas Goad, c.1620.  
 " "An Appeal to the Gospel for the true doctrine of Divine Predestination", John Plasfere, c.1630.  
 " "God's Love to all mankind", Samuel Hoard, 1633.  
 " "Picture of an Antinomian", Bp. Patrick.  
 Vol. III. "Exposition of Romans IX", John Goodwin.  
 Vol. VIII. "Discourse on the Five Points", Daniel Whitby.

B. Not traced to Authors.

- Vol. 1. "Thoughts on Predestination", (? Leslie).  
 Vol. II. "A Treatise concerning Election and Reprobation".  
 Vol. III. "Exposition of Romans VII". It has been verified that this is not Arminius' work of the same title in any form.  
 Vol. VIII. "Of the foreknowledge of God".

These last given as, in each case, "extracted from a late author".

indication, in his selection of material for his specific project in the interests of Arminianism, that his mind was preoccupied not with the Continental but with the English exponents of the doctrines. Dr. Watson, one of the leading systematic theologians of the XIXth century Methodism makes the following statements.<sup>1</sup> "In doctrine, Mr. Wesley was not the implicit follower of any school: ... The Divines of his earliest acquaintance were those of the English Arminian class,...." This writer continues by saying that Wesley did not derive from these authors the guidance he required when he felt the need for pardon and regeneration. "It may be supposed, that had he resorted to the Calvinistic Divines, he would have obtained better information on man's justification before God. So he would had he resorted to the writings of Arminius himself, leaving his more modern followers for their better instructed master; but with the writings of this eminent man he was, we believe, only very partially acquainted, till he had been for many years settled in generally similar views of evangelical doctrine."

The conclusion of this chapter is, therefore, that while it would seem beyond doubt that Wesley was conversant with some, at least, of Arminius' published works, he nowhere refers to them or states directly that he has read any of them, and he finds no need to use them in his own defence, or propagation,

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1. Richard Watson's "Works", Vol. VII, p. 419.

of their cardinal doctrine, being content either with his own presentation, or with those of his countrymen, men who, to repeat, inherited both the native and the Dutch tradition. Wesley, it would seem, found his own views and those chosen to assist him in his campaign sufficiently akin to the position of the father of the Remonstrance to enable him continually to define Arminianism in the English idiom.

## CHAPTER VII.

### COMPARISON OF THE WRITTEN RECORDS OF THE BELIEFS OF ARMINIUS AND WESLEY ON THE DOCTRINES IN QUESTION.

#### SECTION I. CHOICE OF SOURCES.

It remains to substantiate the statement made at the close of the last chapter as to the kinship of the ideas dominant in the minds of Arminius and Wesley in their respective crusades. This can be done only by direct comparison of the matured and authoritative statements of the two men.

So far as Arminius is concerned the document upon which we shall draw for the main portion of our material is the "Declaratio Sententiae &c"<sup>1</sup> and not the better-known "Five Points" of the Remonstrance. For these last were not published until the Synod of Dort (1618), nine years after the death of Arminius and, in view of later aberrations of Remonstrant doctrine, it cannot be assumed<sup>2</sup> that the "Points" necessarily express the views of the founder of the movement himself. And it is our specific purpose here to compare the

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1. Opera, p. 74, para. 9.

2. A cursory examination of the Remonstrance "Points" suggests that, in fact, Arminius would have been generally in agreement with the presentation there given.

thought of the two men, and not the developments to be found in any of their successors. Particularly so in view of Wesley's remarks noted in the last chapter (p.131.) which emphasise that he, Wesley, is concerned alone with the Dutchman's personal views as he defines, for the purposes of his own controversy, the terms of the debate.

Now Arminius died in the autumn of 1609 and during the year that elapsed between the publication of the "Declaration"<sup>1</sup>. and his death he was almost continuously too ill to work. So that we have in the "Declaration" the latest public utterance of his life and if his views underwent any change before his death no record of this remains.

But it will not be possible to confine ourselves to making extracts from the "Declaration" since, on some points, the clear expression of Arminius' views is only to be obtained from other of his public and private statements. Such sources will be noted as used.

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1. The Declaration was delivered in Dutch before the States of Holland at the Hague on 30th Oct. 1608. The States, alarmed at the reports of serious dissention in the Theological Faculty of Leyden, i.e. between Gomarus and Arminius, called a debate between the two before the Supreme Court, as assessors, on 24th May, 1608. The court transmitted a report to the States who, that same day, called Gomarus and Arminius before them. There Arminius offered to make a full and frank statement of his theological position and produced the "Declaration". As stated in Chapter IV, this document had been prepared as Arminius' contribution to a symposium of opinions then being compiled.



When we turn to Wesley, we are at a loss to find any single work that can be set over against the "Declaration" as covering the field of discussion and at the same time carrying the weight of authority possessed by the Arminian document. Wesley was never faced with a situation parallel to that which called forth the "Declaration". It might seem desirable to look first for our evidence to the "Forty-Four Standard Sermons" which, with Wesley's "Notes on the New Testament" are required to be read by every student for the Methodist Ministry, and to be by them generally accepted. These Sermons are the nearest approach to a doctrinal standard<sup>1</sup> passed on by the founder of Methodism to his disciples and successors. The "Forty-Four Sermons" possess, moreover, this advantage, that they exist in the carefully prepared and admirably annotated edition of Dr. Sugden and are therefore textually reliable. However, the very nature of this corpus of teaching imposes limitations upon its usefulness as a source of definite quotations and recourse must be made to other works, namely to the pamphlets published by Wesley bearing specifically upon the Predestinarian Controversy, chief of which is his "Predestination Calmly Considered". The latter was first published in 1752 and has this at least in its favour, that it does enable us to discover in one place most of the material needed. It might be argued that this pamphlet does not

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1. As we have seen, Wesley was never aware of the need of any formal doctrinal statement other than those accepted by the Church of England.

reflect Wesley's mature views, but the writer, after careful scrutiny of many hundreds of references in the "Letters", "Sermons", and "Journal", believes that the quotations etc., used do truly express the thought of Wesley on the issue in its final form.

#### SECTION 11. THE PIVOT OF THE ARMINIAN PROTEST.

At the root of the whole controversy between the high Predestinarians and the advocates of conditional Election lies Calvin's restoration to the heart of theological speculation of the grand doctrine of the Sovereignty of God. It is one of the most insidious manifestations of the perversity of human nature that great and good men should so often forget, in their zeal, the limitations of their wisdom and, in the act of making their supreme contribution to the glorification of God and the good of mankind, should be the originators of contentions and distractions. The present epoch in theology is marked by a re-emphasis upon this same great doctrine, the primary conception of a Sovereign Creator and Provider, under the inspiring leadership of Karl Barth in Zurich. For this reason alone the controversies of the XVIth and XVIIth centuries are redeemed from dull pointlessness for those who to-day turn back the pages to con them over. May it be that the voice of the past, both where it calls "go forward" and also not least where it advises a wise caution, may be truly heard. For it was the inability of many (Calvin himself was by no means guiltless) to see that the inspiring conception of God as

Sovereign Lord of Creation owes so much to human analogy that it is incapable, taken alone, of expressing all that God has revealed to men in Christ, of Himself and His ways, that occasioned the unhappy Predestinarian Controversy in all its stages.

Both our authors clearly recognise the crux of the dispute. "Potest quidem Deus de suo facere quod vult, at non potest velle facere de suo quod iure facere non potest. Nam voluntas illius circumscripta est terminus iustitiae".<sup>1.</sup> "Whatever therefore, it hath pleased God to do, of his sovereign pleasure as Creator of heaven and earth; and whatever his mercy may do on particular occasions, over and above what Justice required: the general rule stands firm as the pillars of heaven: The Judge of all the earth will do right. He will judge the world in righteousness...."<sup>2.</sup> "Let these two ideas of God the Creator, the Sovereign Creator, and God the Governor, the Just Governor, be always kept apart.... So shall we give God the full glory of his sovereign grace, without impeaching his inviolable Justice".<sup>3.</sup>

It will therefore be convenient and logical to make our present comparison under three heads, comprising therein

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1. Opera, p. 370, "Correspondence with Junius". Dr. Harrison selects this as the key sentence of this early work of the author's. The correspondence took place in 1597.
  2. Works, Vol. X, p. 363. "Thoughts upon God's Sovereignty". A pamphlet published in 1777.
  3. Loc. cit. Cf. also Works, Vol. X., p. 220, para. 29, &c.

the main terms current, viz:

1. The Sovereignty of God and Sin,
2. The Sovereignty of God and Salvation,
3. The Sovereignty of God and the Regenerate Life.

SECTION iii. THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD AND SIN.

No fundamental difference has been discovered between the views of Arminius and Wesley on the one part, and of their opponents on the other, in regard to the doctrines of man's primitive State of Innocence, the Fall and Original Sin except perhaps in regard to the interpretation of the purpose for which God ordained these. All parties are at one in stating that Adam in Paradise was endued with Free Will, that he freely chose to disobey the divine command and thereby lost his freedom of choice and all other blessings of his first state, coming utterly under the bondage of sin. They further agree that Adam, as natural parent of the human race, passed on to all his seed this entire corruption, whereby the thoughts, words and deeds of all mankind are, apart from the intervention of grace, of necessity wholly sinful.<sup>1.</sup>

To this, respecting mankind as a whole, the Predestinarian had nothing to add except in regard to the inevitable consequences in condemnation and eternal punishment. God,

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1. For Arminius' views see Opera, p. 98, (De libero Arbitrio &c.); 191 sqq., (Public Disputation VII); 210 sqq (Pub. Disp. XI). For Wesley's views: Works, Vol. IX, p. 192 sq. (Discourse on Original Sin), and Sermons, Vol. ii, pp. 207-225 ("On Original Sin").



in His sovereign power having thus ordained events, had chosen<sup>1</sup> by His arbitrary will certain men to be saved, the choice being in no way dependent on any merit or virtue of the chosen, and had consigned the rest, again of his unconditional choice, to damnation. Since, to repeat, all this came to pass unconditionally and of God's pure will alone, it was clear to the more logical that there was no escaping the conclusion that God was the author of Sin. Though the majority shrank from stating such conclusion and employed argumentative evasions others, including Calvin himself, boldly accepted the run of the argument and attempted to justify the position. It followed that natural man, sinning by necessity, is rewarded or punished for his acts irrespective of justice, as the term is commonly used, but of course the Predestinarians appealed once again to the premise and redefined "justice" of this sort as being "just" because it was the sovereign act of God.

Here Arminius dissented. He says of this doctrine: "Cum iustitia Dei pugnat, idque tam quatenus in Deo amorem iustitiae et odium peccati denotat; quam quatenus perpetua est et constans voluntas suum cuique tribuendi. Quoad prius hoc modo; quia statuit Deum singulares quosdam homines

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1. Either (a) before Creation; or (b) after Creation; or (c) after the Fall. These distinctions are made by Calvinist writers at all stages of the controversy. Predestinarians were not agreed in fixing the occasion of the Decree. The first two views were termed Supralapsarian, and the latter, Sub- or Infralapsarian. Arminius showed by argument that the distinctions were invalid; Wesley ignores them.



praecise velle servare et decrevisisse servare absque ullo iustitiae aut obedientiae intuitu, unde sequitur, quod Deus tales homines magis amet quam iustitiam. Quoad alterum vero, quia statuit Deum velle creaturae suae miseriam inferre, quae non potest nisi peccati poena esse, cum tamen creaturam non intueatur ut peccatricem, ac proinde neque irae aut poenae ream;"<sup>1</sup>. And again: ".... doctrina huius praedestinationis, in gloriam Dei inuria est, quae non consistit in declaratione libertatis aut potestatis, neque in demonstratione irae et potentiae, nisi quousque illa per iustitiam subsistere potest, salvo semper Deo honore suae bonitatis"<sup>2</sup>. Similarly, Wesley protests against the separation in thought of the attributes of God: ".... never speak of the sovereignty of God, but in conjunction with His other attributes. For the Scripture nowhere speaks of this single attribute, as separate from the rest. Much less does it anywhere speak of the sovereignty of God as singly disposing of the eternal states of men. No, no; in this awful work God proceeds according to the known rules of His justice and mercy; but never assigns His sovereignty as the cause why any man is punished with everlasting destruction".<sup>3</sup>.

Both authors spare no pains to make clear the terrible implications of the assertion of God's sovereign power alone,

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1. "Declaration", Opera, p. 85.

2. Op. cit., p. 88.

3. "Predestination Calmly Considered", Works, Vol. X, p. 220.

namely that it fixes the authorship of sin, as of everything else in the Universe, upon the Divine Mind.<sup>1</sup> Both use the argument here as elsewhere, with a consistency and emphasis that is in contrast with the majority of their opponents,<sup>2</sup> that the Scriptures themselves are the final test of doctrine and lend their full weight of testimony against the Predestinarian assertions.

If then, God justly punishes sin, and rewards virtue, both of which have their true origin within the mind of man, and if, as we have seen, it is agreed that natural man is utterly sinful, whence man's power to originate good? The two men unite in ascribing this power to the prevenient grace of God restored to mankind. As, "...gratia sic temperata sit naturae hominis, ut libertatem voluntatis in illo non aboleat, sed eam dirigat atque corrigat depravatam, hominique proprios suos motus permittat...."<sup>3</sup> on the one part, and, "Natural free-will, in the present state of mankind, I do not understand; I only assert, that there is a measure of free-will supernaturally restored to every man...",<sup>4</sup> on the other. It follows that the actions of mankind for or against the Divine Will are the results of genuine choice on the part of men, and therefore justly deserving of punishment or reward.

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1. Arminius, Opera, p. 88. Wesley, Works, Vol. X, p. 260 sqq.

2. Arminius, in a letter to Uitenbogaert writes, of his opponents, "These are the principal arguments which they employ.... But in no quarter do I hear: 'Thus saith the Lord!'"

3. Opera, p. 87.

4. Works, Vol. X, p. 229.

To put it shortly, if we accept Wesley's definition,<sup>1</sup>

"Nothing is sin, strictly speaking, but a voluntary transgression of a known law of God",<sup>2</sup> then men truly sin.

It is to be noticed that Wesley is speaking here of what he elsewhere calls "actual sin" to distinguish it from Original Sin. Arminius could be quoted to shew that he is substantially of the same mind in regard to these distinctions and definitions. Were this a criticism of the theology of either or both of them something would need to be said as to the adequacy of their conceptions. Dr. Sugden, in a note in his edition of Wesley's Sermons, points out some defects of the Wesley conception. But it is sufficient here to indicate the identity of view of the two men with whom we are concerned at yet another stage of the argument.

#### SECTION iv. THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD AND SALVATION.

Again we may begin with the fundamental ground of agreement between all parties. For whatever end and by whatever method, God does save some men from their sin and from its consequences. And, furthermore, the merits and death of Christ are the means, according to the New Testament, that the Author of Salvation employs. And in whatever manner Christ's atoning work is applied to the individual it is a work of grace throughout. Man, of his own natural will and power, cannot and does not have part in effecting his own salvation. So far,

1. See Arminius likewise, Opera, p. 87.

2. Works, Vol. Xll, p. 378.

Wesley and Arminius would join the most rigid Calvinist in maintaining the sovereign power of God, and the helplessness of fallen mankind.<sup>1</sup> Here the ways part. The Predestinarian went on to assert that those only are saved who, by God's Sovereign Will, were from all eternity chosen; the rest of mankind being condemned (either in default of election or as a separate act - the distinctions belong to scruple rather than to logic and are irrelevant in this connection) to eternal death. Consequent upon this Christ dies only for the Elect.

In turning to the subjects of our comparison we need not go again over their many assertions of the injustice of such a scheme. Nor need we be detained by the extensive use of Scripture by both to shew the incompatibility of this conception of Atonement with Revelation. A further class of arguments claims attention.

In the first place, what value has evangelisation - the whole business of seeking to win men for Christ, in such a providence? In his XVllllth paragraph on the objections to Unconditional Predestination Arminius puts the position thus; "Non enim potest homo minister et cooperarius Dei esse, neque verbum per hominem praedicatum instrumentum gratiae et Spiritus esse, si Deus eum, qui mortuus est in peccato, vivificat per irresistibilem vim...", and, "... per hanc Praedestinationem ministerium, Evangelii respectu maiores partis auditorum

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1. Opera, p. 98, and Sermons, Vol. 1, p. 37.



constituiter 'odor mortis ad mortem....' "1. Likewise Wesley:-  
 "Can we think, that the righteous and holy God would encourage His Ministers to call them to leave and rest the weight of their immortal concerns upon a gospel, a covenant of grace, a Mediator, and His merit and righteousness? all of which are a mere nothing with regard to them, a heap of names, an unsupporting void which cannot uphold them?"2.

The second objection advanced is that the logical outcome of such a plan of Salvation as that which they oppose is that it most seriously detracts from the value and centrality of the work of Christ. If the number of the Elect is determined before the Incarnation, then to put it rather crudely, the Incarnation was only a rather unnecessary piece of machinery for implementing the salvation of the chosen few. For the rest of the world it was and is a heartless mockery. "Haec doctrina ipsi quoque Jesu Christo Servatori ignominiosa est. Nam (1) excludit illum a decreto praedestinationis, quae finem praedestinat; dicitque homines prius praedestinos ut serventur, quam ille praedestinos sit ut servet; in tantum, ut non sit fundamentum electionis. (2), Negat quod Christus meritoria causa sit, quae amissam nobis salutem rursus impetraverit; ponendo illum subordinatam solum causam salutis, eius nempe quae iam ante praeordinata sit, et sicque minister solum et instrumentum quod salutem nobis applicet".

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1. In the Declaration, Opera, p. 89.

2. Works, p. 227. It appears that Wesley is quoting, but certainly it is a clear expression of his own views, as the context shews.



And a sentence later, "Quod si ita est, impossibile igitur fuit ut talium hominum salus amitteretur: proinde etiam necesse non fuit, ut merito Christi, qui ipsis solis salvator praeordinatus est, repararetur, et tam/quam de novo recuperaretur et inveniretur".<sup>1</sup> Wesley is more vigorous, if less precise: "Our blessed Lord does indisputably command and invite all men everywhere to repent.... But now in what manner do you represent Him, while He is employed in this work? You suppose Him to be standing at the prison doors, having the keys thereof in His hands, and to be continually inviting the prisoners to come forth, commanding them to accept of that invitation, urging every motive which can possibly induce them to comply with that command; adding the most precious promises, if they obey, the most dreadful threatenings if they do not; and all this time you suppose Him to be unalterably determined in Himself never to open the doors for them! .... Alas .... what kind of sincerity in this, which you ascribe to God our Saviour?" Thus do they challenge the implications of Predestinarian doctrine.

Many other points are raised negatively, most being noted by both, a few being peculiar to one or the other, but at a glance their positive statements will be of more value than a catalogue of these. By way of variety the English shall come first. "To tear up the very roots of reprobation, and of all doctrines that have a necessary connexion therewith, God

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1. Opera, p. 88.

declares in His word these three things; and that explicitly in so many terms: (1) "Christ died for all", (11 Cor. V.14). Namely all that were dead in sin, as the words immediately following fix the sense; Here is a fact affirmed. (2) "He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world" (1 Jn.11.2) even of all those for whom He died: Here is the consequence of His dying for all. And, (3) "He died for all, that they should not live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them" (11 Cor. V.15) that they might be saved from their sins: Here is the design, the end of His dying for them".<sup>1</sup> We might add to this the gist of the argument from the same work,<sup>2</sup> that God supplies prevenient and efficacious grace to all men to enable them to offer the response of faith to Christ. But a few words from the famous sermon, "The Scripture was of Salvation" will be more concise: "Preventing grace; all the drawings of the Father - the desire after God, all that light wherewith the Son of God 'Enlighteneth every one that cometh into the world'".

At this point we may introduce the succinct expression of his positive views made by Arminius in the Declaration. "Primum et absolutum Dei decretum de homine peccatore servando, esse, quo decrevit Filium suum Jesum Christum ponere in Mediatorem,

1. Works, Vol. X, p. 225. In the same work Wesley expressly states that Predestination is one, in his consideration, and therefore he here attacks not reprobation only, but the whole scheme.

2. "Predestination Calmly Considered", Works, Vol. X, p. 232.

Redemptorem, Salvatorem, Sacerdotem et Regem; qui peccatum morte sua aboleat, amissam salutem obedientia sua impetret, et virtute sua communicet. Secundum praecisum et absolutum Dei decretum esse, quo decrevit resipiscentes atque credentes in gratiam recipere, eosque, perseverantes ad finem usque, salvos facere in Christo, propter Christum et per Christum; impenitentes vero atque infideles in peccato et sub ira derelinquere, atque damnare tamquam alienos a Christo. Tertium Dei decretum est, quo decrevit media ad resipicientiam et fidem necessaria, sufficienter atque efficaciter administrare. Hanc administrationem institui iuxta sapientiam Dei, qua scit, quid misericordiam et severitatem suam deceat, itemque iuxta iustitiam eius per quam paratus est, sapientiae suae praescriptum sequi atque executioni mandare. Hinc sequi quartum decretum, quo decrevit singulares atque certas quasdam personas salvare et damnare. Atque hoc decretum praescientia Dei innititur, qua ab aeterno scivit, quinam iuxta eiusmodi administrationem mediorum ad conversionem et fidem idoneorum, ex praeveniente ipsius gratia credituri erant, et ex subsequente gratia perseveraturi; quive vero etiam non erant credituri atque perseveraturi."<sup>1</sup>.

Doubtless it has been noticed that the writer does not explicitly state in the above that the death of Christ was intended by the Father to be offered to the benefit of all

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1. Opera, p. 95 sq.

mankind although, reading through the articles, it is difficult to suppose that the implication was not intended. However, something final can be obtained. In his Public Discourse on the "Vocation of men to Salvation"<sup>1</sup> he says (para. 6) that the object of vocation is mankind in his natural and fallen state, i.e. the whole race of sinful men; and later, that rejection of the word of grace is not in the intention of God who gives it.

The correspondence of the first three articles of the above with Wesley's sentiments is clear. But the fourth, placing the explanation of a Particular Election in God's foreknowledge, has not been hitherto noted in Wesley. But here is material for our use: "... if we speak properly there is no such thing as either foreknowledge or afterknowledge in God. All time, or rather all eternity.... being present to Him at once, He does not know one thing before another.... as all time,.... is present with Him at once, so He sees at once, whatever was, is, or will be, to the end of time. But observe; we must not think they are because He knows them.... the sun does not shine because I know it, but I know it because he shines".<sup>2</sup> So, he continues, God knows that we sin, but we do not sin because God knows it. Wesley is attempting to honour the omniscience of God and yet leave room in man's

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1. Opera, p. 229.

2. Sermon on "Predestination", Works, Vol. VI, p. 226sq.



nature for real choice. He is further aware that foreknowledge itself, like the God who foreknows, belongs to eternity. And Wesley is in advance, refreshingly and surprisingly so, of Arminius here; the latter thinks of eternity only as endless time, but Wesley has the germs of a conception of eternity, i.e. that it is other than time, that is only now being worked out in its implications for philosophy and theology.

SECTION v. THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD AND THE REGENERATE LIFE.

Just as all parties unite with Paul, Augustine and the first Reformers in ascribing the whole work of bringing fallen man once more into a State of Grace so there is no voice raised against the Scriptural doctrine that man continues therein by the act of God alone. Christ is sufficient for all who will embrace Him to enable them to attain to sanctity of life in this world and to be assured that if they continue to accept His grace they shall finally persevere to eternal salvation. But this is, again, stating the doctrines (e.g. of Sanctification, Assurance, Perfection, and Final Perseverance) conditionally and is therefore not in harmony with the Predestinarian scheme.

The sovereign will of God having foreordained the salvation of some, these must inevitably enjoy full salvation both in the present and the future life. So ran the argument. Those given to know (and all rigid Predestinarians seem to have been very sure themselves on the point) that they were of the number of the Elect, could be fully assured of their present and future salvation. No matter what a man did,



said or thought, the sovereign will of God must prevail.

This presentation could not commend itself to Arminius. After the first and by far the largest section of the Declaration on Predestination, there follow the nine other headings, four of which are amplifications of points raised in the major discussion and three bear on the continuance of a believer in the regenerate state, viz:- No. V, "The Perseverance of the Saints"; No. VI, "The Assurance of Salvation"; and No VII, "The Perfection of Believers in this Life". Let us hear him on the first head.

"Quantum ad Perseverantiam Sanctorum, de ea sic sentio, eos qui Jesu Christo per veram fidem insiti sunt, sicque Spiritus vivificantis illius participes facti sunt, sufficientes vires habere ad pugnandum cum Satana, peccato, mundo, propriaque sua carne, atque ad obtinendum victoriam; sed tamen non nisi per assistentiam gratia eiusdem spiritus, quinimo Jesum Christum per suum spiritum illis in omnibus tentationibus adsistere atque auxiliarem manum praebere, et modo ad pugnam parati sint atque operam ipsius implorent, sibi que ipsis non desint, eos a lapsu praeservare, sic ut nulla astutia aut vi Satanae seduci aut ex manibus Christi trahi possint: sed utrum iidem per negligentiam initium sua in Christo existentia deserere non possint, praesenti huic mundo rursus adhaerere, a sana doctrine semel illis tradita deficere, bonam conscientiam amittere, gratiam irritam facere; id vero uti ex Scriptura diligenter inquitur, utile esse arbitror,

simulque etiam necesse fore, ut de eo in primo nostro conventu agamus. Ingenue tamen affirmo, nunquam me docuisse quod vere credens aut totaliter aut finaliter a fide deficiat, sicque pereat, quamvis non dissimulem esse loca Scripturae, quae id videantur prae se ferre,...."<sup>1</sup>. The writer, it will be seen, has not made up his mind. But the trend of his thought is clear; it is toward the position that believers can utterly fall from grace. However, for the moment he cannot advance beyond the position that the regenerate possess, by grace, sufficient powers to persevere in sinlessness. And on what has been said generally at the beginning of this comparison this must stand for Arminius' final word.

But Wesley has no such doubts. He contradicts nothing of his predecessor's position, but makes the logical advance. He was faced not with the theoretical dilemma before Arminius but with his practical experience as an evangelist and pastor. With innumerable cases before him of men and women who, after a glorious entry upon the Christian life, relapsed again into vice and degradation, he could not escape the conclusion that Justification and Sanctification must be, for practical use, regarded as distinct, though closely related, stages in the process of individual salvation.<sup>2</sup> It is true that in the work to which we have largely referred<sup>3</sup> he remarks, "Argument from experience alone will never determine this

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1. Opera, p. 98.

2. Sermons, Vol. 1, p. 119.

3. Works, Vol. X, p. 242.

point". But, in the same tract; "Is not the faithfulness of God engaged to keep all that now believe from falling away? I cannot say that. Whatever assurance God may give to particular souls I find no general promise in Holy Writ...." In the early Oxford sermon on "Salvation by Faith"<sup>1</sup> the believer, he says, is saved "from the fear, though not from the possibility, of falling away from the grace of God". Dr. Sugden, in a note at this point, directs attention to a letter<sup>2</sup> dated 1789, i.e. at the end of Wesley's life, where he refers to the doctrine of Unconditional Perseverance as, "This poisonous doctrine" - the reasons given for the judgment all reflecting the impression made upon him by years of practical experience, and especially his conflict with the baneful effects of Antinomianism.<sup>3</sup>

Since our object is to set the thought of the one man in juxtaposition with that of the other it is impossible to pass on without a brief note on their common uneasiness over the use of the phrase "the Imputed Righteousness of Christ". The difficulty is this: granted Christ's death was sufficient to atone for the sins of all men, are believers justified solely on account of that ransom paid for them or must not their faith (the fruit of grace, of course) be also counted a necessary ground of salvation? In a pamphlet Wesley

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1. No. 1, Standard Edition of Sermons.

2. Works, Vol. XLII, p. 116.

3. In a letter of 1757 (Standard Letters, Vol. III, p. 230) Wesley says of Hervey that he "is a deeprooted Antinomian - that is, a Calvinist consistent with himself...".

says; "The expression, 'the imputed righteousness of Christ', which I still say, I dare not insist upon, because I cannot find it in the Bible... I am myself all the more sparing in the use of it, because it has been so frequently and so dreadfully abused, and because the Antinomians use it at this day (1762) to justify the grossest abominations".<sup>1</sup> Christ's righteousness is imputed to the justified, he goes on, not as an unconditional act of God, but "It is imputed to everyone that believes, as soon as he believes".<sup>2</sup> Any further explanation of the problem will appear unnecessary as we see how Arminius faces it. He was called to account by his adversaries on many occasions for his views and, of his answers, perhaps that in his letter to the Palatinate Ambassador at the Hague is most concise.<sup>3</sup> It runs, "Hoc autem culpant nonnulli, quod ipsum fidei actum, id est, *ut* credere dico imputari in iustitiam, idque proprio sensu, non metonymice". He calls Paul to witness that he is right to use the statement thus, but points out that it is quite erroneous for anybody to deduce from this that, for him, Christ and His righteousness are excluded from Justification. "Dico igitur fidem imputari nobis in iustitiam, propter Christum et iustitiam eius: in qua enunciatione fides est

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1. "Thoughts upon Christ's Imputed Righteousness", Works, Vol. X, p. 315.
  2. Sermons, Vol. 11, p. 428.
  3. "Letter to Hyppolytus a Collibus", Opera, p. 772. The whole matter is, however, treated in the same way in Section 1X of the Declaration.



obiectum imputationis, Christus vero et obedientia eius causa iustificationis impetratoria seu meritoria;...." Enough has been said to illustrate our contention that both men were fully aware of the necessity of using the phrase under review with caution and just safeguard.

The second matter coming under the third general heading is that of Assurance. That God may and, to some, does grant an assurance that they enjoy a sanctified state is the position taken up by both men. It is possible even, Arminius adds, for a man to die assured of his eternal salvation. "Quantum ad certitudinem salutis, statuo eum, qui credit in Jesum Christum, tam ex actione Spiritus sancti intus ipsum agentis et fructibus fidei, quam ex propria sua conscientia et testimonio Spiritus una cum ea testante,<sup>1</sup> certum persuasumque posse esse atque etiam reipsa certum esse, si cor suum se non condemnet, Filium se Dei esse atque in gratia Jesu Christi stare, quinimo cum certa fiducia gratiae Dei et misericordiae in Christo ex hac vita migrare posse et coram tribunali gratiae comparere, citra anxium timorem &c. &c..." But, "...hanc certitudinem non audeo..., quanti est illa certitudo, qua scimus, Deum esse &c..."<sup>2</sup>.

Wesley's best and one of his latest expressions of conviction (he had modified his views with the passage of time)

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1. Compare Wesley on the concurrence of the witness of the Spirit with our spirit. e.g. Standard Sermon, No. X., with this title.
  2. Opera, p. 99.



is given in a letter to Dr. Rutherford dated 28th March, 1768.<sup>1</sup> He says he dislikes the word "Assurance" since it is unscriptural. A very few have an assurance of everlasting salvation. He continues, "I believe a consciousness of being in the favour of God (which I do not term full assurance, since it is frequently weakened, nay perhaps interrupted, by returns of doubts and fears) is the common privilege of Christians, fearing God and working righteousness. Yet I do not affirm there are no exceptions to this general rule.... Therefore I have not for many years, thought a consciousness of acceptance to be essential to justifying faith".

We may briefly summarise the joint opinion. All who believe in Christ may trust him that he will be "sufficient for them". They can all be assured of that. Many are granted, by God's grace, such a confidence in the power of Christ, not merely to restore but to preserve, that they have a strong confidence in their continuance in grace. A few are granted confidence that their eternal salvation is assured. Both men realise that in making man a real co-operator (albeit his power to co-operate is by grace) in the work of his own salvation, human weakness is admitted into the conviction he may have of the certainty of his salvation.

The last of the three sections of the Declaration which we will notice is No. VII, "The Perfection of Believers in

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1. Letters, Vol. V., p. 359.

this Life". On this point - the only one so far as has here been discovered - Arminius and Wesley disagree. Dr. R.N. Flew says,<sup>1</sup> "I have not found Dr. Pope's assumption justified that Wesley's doctrine of perfection was indebted to the Arminian divines". So far as Arminius himself is concerned this is confirmed by a comparison of the Declaration (Article VII, Opera, p. 99) with Wesley's many writings on the point. Arminius states that he can neither affirm nor deny sinless perfection in this life. Because nothing good is impossible to God it is possible for a believer to attain a sinless perfection. We perceive that he is thinking of something other than Wesley's "perfect love". Wesley's dislike for the term "sinless perfection" has been made known beyond need of reiteration. And it is not intended, in view of the completeness of Dr. Flew's book, to pursue the matter further.

#### SECTION vi. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE COMPARISON.

Although this comparison leaves much to be desired as a study of parallelism in thought, it is clear that the disagreement of the two men is small, and their agreement very great indeed. In the attack upon Predestination no major points of disagreement could be found. Sometimes one, sometimes the other, uses artillery not employed by his comrade in arms. But never are their guns directed against each other. In their

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1. "The Idea of Perfection", preface, vii; this book is easily the most complete and exhaustive study of the subject of Perfection.

positive statements, similarly, there are instances where Wesley has progressed, has developed the earlier man's thinking, and in so doing has avoided the Socinian, Arian and other errors of the later Remonstrants and of many English Arminians. Never, however, does he deny his predecessor. So that it is fair to say that he is perhaps the most faithful of all Arminius' disciples. It is to be noted that there is some parallel between the orders in which the arguments are marshalled in the "Declaration" and in Wesley's pamphlet on Predestination. But this almost certainly is due to the exigencies of the logical approach and of formal theological debate. In part, also, the order is fixed by the very nature of the dispute. It cannot be inferred that Wesley used the Declaration as a basis for his own tract. In general, the conclusion here, as elsewhere, is that Wesley's first-hand acquaintance with Arminius' own views came late in his, Wesley's, lifetime, after he had, under various impulses, imbued his native Arminianism with a renewed fidelity to the great truths of the Reformation and the New Testament.

But the close kinship of thought is obvious. There is nothing to dispute Wesley's claim that he was a true, an original Arminian. Rather there is conclusive evidence that the two men were in complete agreement in defining the field of the conflict with Calvinism and in meeting the arguments of the opposition with an enlightened use of Scripture, a realistic appreciation of the facts of life, and with clear

intellectual processes.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about the controversy is the deeper conception of religion to be found in Arminius and Wesley, in contrast to the somewhat arid faith of many of their opponents.<sup>1</sup> For both men the crux of religion is the love of God as manifest in His gracious gift of His Son as Redeemer for all mankind, offering salvation in Christ and grace to accept it. Upon this their theology was built. Let us close with yet another pair of quotations: "De "(Praedestinatione)" sic sentio, illam esse decretum Dei aeternum et gratiosum in Christo, quo statuit fideles iustificare, adoptare et vita aeterna donare: infideles vero et impenitentes condemnare".<sup>2</sup> "God has decreed, from all eternity.... He that believeth shall be saved: He that believeth not, shall be condemned: And in order to this, "Christ died for all, all that were dead in trespasses and sins, that is for every child of Adam since 'in Adam all died'".<sup>3</sup>

"Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning,"

"Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ."

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1. It is not forgotten that many saints of the Church held the doctrine of the Absolute Decrees. The writer's own debt to the writings of some such is gratefully admitted.
  2. Opera, p. 771.
  3. Works, Vol. X , p. 359 sqq.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.

"Methodist theology", wrote Dr. Pope, "is catholic in the best sense, holding the Doctrinal Articles of the English Church, including the three Creeds and .... maintaining the general doctrines of the Reformation. It is Arminian as opposed to Calvinism, but in no other sense."<sup>1</sup> This statement would be equally valid if, for "Methodist", we substituted "Wesley's". And, to take to paradox, it would still be a true generalisation if it read "Arminius' theology &c....". Both men strenuously maintained that those items of their teaching which their opponents stigmatised as innovation were nothing more than the restoration of genuine Christian beliefs. Moreover, they claimed that they had behind them the weight of opinion of the Protestant Reformers. Only against what they believed to be the misdirection of thought in Calvin and his school, and that on a narrow field of Christian theology, did they enter their protest. But none the less, upon the point of disagreement, they believed the issue to be worthy of their consecrated protagonism.

Briefly to summarise the argument of the thesis, this is the claim, so far as our study has enabled us to see it,

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1. W.B. Pope, "Compendium of Theology", Vol. 1., p. 20.



that Wesley would have made; the claim, moreover, here supported. The doctrine of a General Atonement<sup>1</sup> is a part of the New Testament Gospel; it was held by the great mass of opinion in the Church from the Primitive Fathers to the Reformation; it was then taught by the Lutheran-Melanchthonian branches of the reformed Church and passed thence, on the one hand into the English Church and its formularies while, on the other hand, it continued to be maintained by the Lutheran bodies and was revived in the "Reformed" Church by the Remonstrants; the two streams, the native and the Dutch, united in England in the XVIIth century and provided the source from which John Wesley derived this article of his creed.

After quoting Heylyn's dictum, "If Tertullian's rule be good (*id verum est, quod primum*) then Calvin's .... views have least support," Dr. Watson upholds, with detail, the above judgment. He concludes, "the Lutheran Church held the leading doctrines of personal religion and salvation as fully and as consistently as the Genevan Churches; and the same blessed truths are as fully embodied in the Melanchthonian liturgy of the Church of England as in the purely Calvinistic formularies of the Church of Scotland."<sup>2</sup>

Again and again the temptation has been great to pause in comment upon fascinating but circumferential details discovered

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1. To use a phrase not without objection as a title for the doctrine in mind, but one which can hardly be replaced by any more suitable term.
  2. Richard Watson, "Works", 1836, Vol. 1., p. 18.

in the main search. Nothing has been said, for instance, of the views of the two men upon the interpretation of Holy Scripture. The contrast between their common mind and the Calvinist view on the place and authority of the Fathers and of confessional statements in Christian apologetic has been but scantily treated. But their agreement upon these and other matters is remarkable. Thus the student cannot but mark the contrast between the development of Arminius' theology in later "Arminianism" and in Wesley. While "Arminianism" came to be associated in the Evangelical mind with heterodoxy, even heresy, Wesley, ignoring these aberrations, fixed upon the fundamental soundness not only of the statement of but also the approach to theology of the Father of the Remonstrants. As Principal Tulloch has pointed out, "Arminianism" sprang from the moral rather than from the intellectual side of the Protestant conscience.<sup>1</sup> Both men were very largely moved by their great awareness of the dire need of mankind and the lovingkindness of God. In Wesley's case we have seen where he acquired his belief in a Universal Atonement but why he was constrained to reassure himself of the orthodoxy of this particular facet of Christian truth and why he should select it for a spirited defence not accorded to some others is another matter. Wesley's sentiment urged him, from the first,

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1. "Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the XVIIth Century", Vol. 1, p. 18. But it must be remembered that Arminianism played an important part in liberating Christian thinking from bondage to accepted methods (largely Scholastic) of approach and therefore gave an impetus to constructive systematic theology.

to a rejection of Unconditional Predestination. The early searching of the standards of his own communion at Oxford was prompted by developments taking place in his personal life; it was no mere dispassionate examination by a prospective ordinand of what might be termed a "set book". He looked for what his own soul needed. And, though there is an interval between the time when he was reassured that Christ died for all and the hour when he apprehended the saving corollary that Christ died for John Wesley, yet the steps in the spiritual pilgrimage are clear before us, each footprint pointing to its successor. The experiences of parish life and in Georgia helped to impress upon his mind the yearning of mankind for divine help and we know from his own Journal that he was increasingly aware of his own inability to offer an adequate message of promise. Thus there came about that linking of practical experience with abstract conviction which appears in all Wesley's formal arguments (and in those of Arminius) but which shines out from the whole epic of his life and mission. This union it was that turned "Arminianism" into a major element of a "gospel". Dr. H.B. Workman gives it as his opinion that, whether or not Wesley had followed Whitefield in theology in the early days, the appeal to experience, now regarded as a characteristic of Wesleyanism, must inevitably have led to an Arminian doctrine of the Atonement.<sup>1.</sup>

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1. "A New History of Methodism", 1909. Vol. 1., pp. 34-36.

This preoccupation with God's attribute of Mercy, is, as has been said, common to Arminius and Wesley. Neither man, however, made the mistake of overlooking that other essential of a Christian conception of the Divine, the attribute of Justice. Dr. Platt remarks<sup>1</sup> that Arminianism is a delicately balanced system. The extreme guardedness of Arminius' every statement on the fundamental questions in dispute reveals his consciousness of this and there is, of course, Wesley's famous sentence, "The true Gospel touches the very edge both of Calvinism and Antinomianism, so that nothing but the mighty power of God can prevent our sliding either into the one or the other."<sup>2</sup> All the more reason why both men should feel called to warn their fellows against the danger, to fence around with sound doctrine, as the Church Catholic has done in all ages, the slippery precipices of error which beset the seeker for Christian truth upon every side. It is only those who desire to recognise truth, wherever it may be found, for its own sake who welcome that grace which is necessary for a tolerant recognition of elements of abiding value in the systems of others with a different approach. Ignorance and pride are the parents of persecution. "How many .... have involved in indiscriminate censure a system" (Arminianism) "of which they knew nothing, with one which Arminius himself would have condemned as loudly as they!" The writer of the

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1. Article in E.R.E., "Arminianism".

2. Letter to Miss March, 7th April, 1763. Letters, Vol. 1V., p. 208.



above further points out that Wesley's lot was also this same intentional ignorance and confusion on the part of his opponents on the issue of Predestination. A second parallel is drawn; Arminius came to arrest the march of extreme Calvinism in the Reformed Churches, Wesley to arrest that progress in the English Church of the XVIIIth century. And a third; both met their opposition with understanding and tolerance, in a true spirit of Christian charity.<sup>1</sup>

Arminius and Wesley were both greater than "Arminianism". Wesley, in particular, invested the teaching with a new spiritual power. The practical application of the doctrine of a Universal Atonement in a crusade for the salvation of a world parish, which was Wesley's greatness, was responsible for the almost complete triumph of true and original Arminianism in theological thought in the years after his death. Not merely the Methodists of the world, many millions in number, but the majority of other Protestant communions admitted the Scriptural truth of Wesley's teaching even though the name of Arminius was forgotten. Wesley's Arminianism was "Evangelical Arminianism", with a long and distinguished ancestry but owing its dynamic qualities as much to the living faith of the XVIIIth century Englishman as to the legacy of faithful witness bequeathed to posterity by the XVIth century Dutchman.

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1. R. Watson, "Works", Vol. VII., pp. 475-8.



A LIST OF SOME BOOKS CONSULTED.

This List is not exhaustive as a number of works not bearing directly upon any aspect of the subject have furnished details of a valuable nature. Such books are not included here.

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